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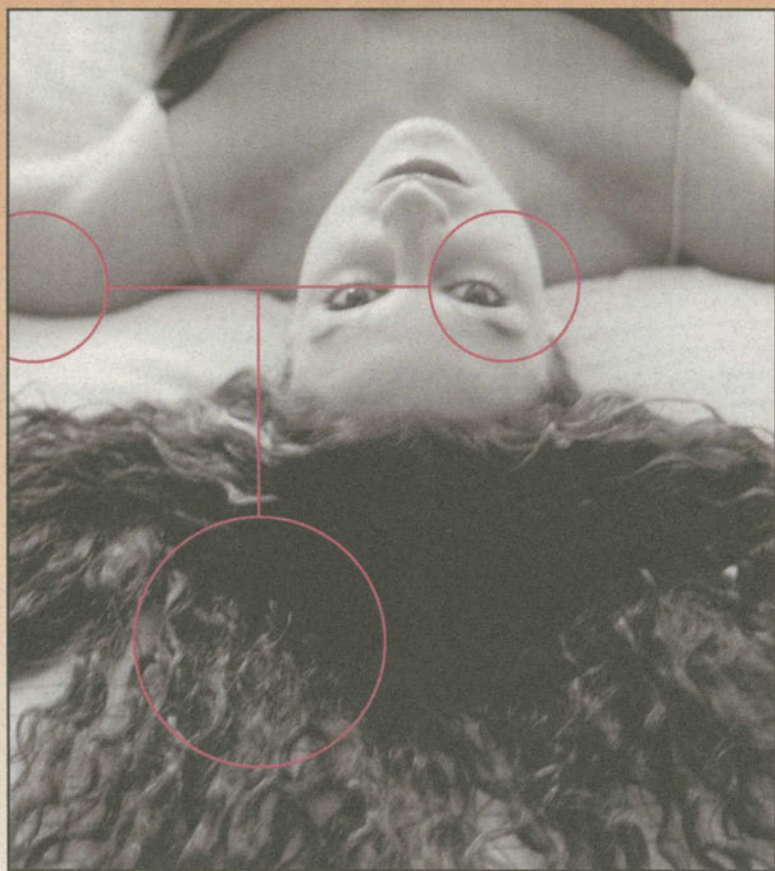
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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

January 2003
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University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Announcing the 2002 Guide Book to Gift Books

Books make great gifts, but picking the perfect books for your favorite youngsters can be daunting. Now the expert staff of *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* have created a guide to help you navigate the bookstore wilderness full of shiny new children's books.



Offering brief annotations for over 150 of the best books for giving (and receiving), the *Guide Book to Gift Books* is available for only \$3.50 as a downloadable PDF file that you can print out and use for every holiday, birthday, or other gift-giving occasion on your calendar this year.

Listed books have all been recommended in full *Bulletin* reviews from 1999-2002 and are verified as currently in print. Entries are divided into age groups and include author, title, publisher, and the current list price.

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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

*	Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R	Recommended.
Ad	Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M	Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR	Not recommended.
SpC	Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR	A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

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THE BIG PICTURE

The Queen of Everything

by Deb Caletti

There are a lot of people on the edge in young-adult novels, especially young people struggling with serious problems, risking life and future. Though adults too are beset by demons, acute crises are generally the province of the young, even when it's in response to the troubles of their elders.

Caletti's novel initially looks like it's going to fit that solid and reliable pattern. High-school-junior Jordan has long been at odds with her bohemian mother; after one fight too many (during which her mother calls her "the queen of everything"), Jordan walks out on her mother—and her mother's live-in boyfriend, their impending baby, and their motley crew of boarders—to live with her staid and orderly optometrist father. She's somewhat concerned about her grandfather, who's continually antagonizing his boss at the gas station he formerly owned, and she's sliding into a halfway romance with Kale, a boy she largely despises but enjoys physically. Pushing its way out from beneath those worries, however, is something much darker and more threatening: her father's increasing obsession with the elegant Gayle D'Angelo, a married neighbor. Jordan watches in dismay as her mild-mannered dad turns into another person, becoming cocky ("Apparently he'd had a little taste of being an asshole and found it to his liking") and heedless as the affair begins, then disturbingly desperate as Gayle plays him against her husband, until finally he erupts, leaving Mr. D'Angelo dead, himself in jail, and Jordan trying to pick up the pieces of her life.

Caletti sets up Jordan's narration as the ubiquitous school assignment, making the climax clear from the beginning, but the inevitability only adds to the plot's momentum. The book unfolds the drama slowly and suspensefully, creating an everyday teen world that's perceptive, funny, and nuanced in its own right, then shadowing that vision with the gathering darkness of the impending tragedy ("‘Nothing's going to change,’ I said. Which are about the stupidest four words in the English language"). There's a rawness to the portrait of Jordan's father, unable and perhaps even unwilling to pull himself out of his Gayle-centered spiral, hardly seeing his daughter or the consequences of his actions. There's a parallel vulnerability to the portrait of Jordan herself, a normal kid who sees that her father may take her forever out of the realm of the normal (she's frightened by the "sudden realization that terrible things might not just be for other people"); there's true pathos in her complete helplessness ("I wondered if I should call someone. I wondered who exactly I would call") in the face of creeping disaster and authenticity in her puny efforts to forestall it (she even tells his parents in the desperate hope that they can check their son's madness).

This is indeed tasty melodrama, and the book's paperback-original format and eye-catching cover make it an attractive and appealing package. There's more than mere voyeurism here, however. While there's a fair amount of litera-

ture devoted to describing young people's struggle for individual identity during adolescence, there's less on the recognition that adults, even one's own parents, are separate agents too; that their lives may also change in stunning ways that have nothing do with their kids but nonetheless changes their lives as a consequence; that, as Jordan says, "people you love can be the biggest strangers." Jordan fortunately discovers both kinds of individual identity, managing to differentiate between her father's irrevocable direction and her own reversible one and thereby to pull out of her own spiral, surviving "broken but still whole." Ultimately, this is a story all the more compelling (and all the darker) for its firm grasp on reality and the utter credibility of its vision. (Imprint information appears on p. 191.)

Deborah Stevenson, Editor



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

AIKEN, JOAN, ad. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*; illus. by Belinda Downes. DK, 2002 40p
ISBN 0-7894-8799-3 \$15.99

Ad 5-8 yrs

Turning her capable hand to retelling a widely known fairy tale, Aiken offers a comfortable and colloquial (if lengthy) version, and the story itself follows the well-loved and predictable pattern of numerous other retellings. Aiken-specific details include a stolen, ruby-encrusted, magical hand mirror given to petulant asides; seven dwarf brothers named Sachie, Fred, Ted, Ike, Mike, Sim, and Tim; and a wicked queen who perishes not by dancing in red-hot iron shoes but by having her heart pierced by a sliver of magic mirror that she broke in a rage. Downes' fabric-collage illustrations are enhanced with embroidered details that bring out the textures of the materials used while further defining the images, and viewers will enjoy seeing how she puts it all together. The stiffness of the medium somewhat limits the ability to communicate character through subtle facial expressions (the three basic faces here are smiles, frowns, and mouths-at-rest), and ultimately the visuals call attention to their own craftsmanship rather than assisting in conveying the story. This book doesn't have the sweep of Trina Schart Hyman's illustrations for Paul Heins' *Snow White* (BCCB 5/75), but it is a cozy representation of the popular tale that will surely get some use. JMD

ALEXANDER, LLOYD *The Rope Trick*. Dutton, 2002 195p
ISBN 0-525-47020-4 \$16.99

R Gr. 4-7

Lidi is a traveling magician seeking to master the perfect trick: the rope trick of legendary magician Ferramondo, wherein the magician tosses a rope into the air, climbs up, and disappears. She and her canvasmaster, Jericho, her only companion since the death of her father, travel from town to town, performance to performance. In the course of their journey they pick up a few more companions:

Daniella, the traveling show's "added attraction," a child psychic and mind-reader; and Julian, a fugitive fleeing the unjust accusations of a *padrone*, an overseer on one of the feudal-like estates. Their journey includes encounters with colorful circus performers, a brief stay in the ghetto of magicians, the occasional romantic interlude, and a fair amount of close calls and slick escapes. Through it all Lidi seeks Ferramondo, determined to learn the rope trick that will make her a master magician, but when an unscrupulous landowner kidnaps Daniella, Lidi needs more than sleight of hand to save the little girl. Alexander places his picaresque adventure in an Italianate setting with details recalling the Tuscan countryside. The story contains the components familiar to romantic adventures: secret connections, shifting loyalties, vengeful betrayals, etc. The plot moves through some familiar but intriguing rhythms, following easily identified character types (although even when characterizations are more functional than three-dimensional, they are pithy and distinct). The suddenness of Lidi's improvisational mastering of the rope trick in a time of great danger and her transcendence of the rules of stage magic unfortunately give the conclusion a contrived feeling that doesn't jibe with the adventurous action of the earlier pages. Still, the carnival atmospherics combined with the chase-and-escape suspense makes this a reasonable choice for romance and action fans. JMD

BERGMAN, MARA *Musical Beds*; illus. by Marjolein Pottie. McElderry, 2002 33p

ISBN 0-689-84463-8 \$14.95

R 3-5 yrs

Everyone in the family is supposed to be asleep in their own beds, when Josie sits up in bed and calls for her father: "Daddy! . . . Come here, quick! There's a witch in my room." After assuring Josie there's no witch, Daddy tucks her in, but Josie can't sleep in her own bed, so she climbs into Mom and Dad's bed instead. Ruby has the same problem—after a tuck-in by Daddy, off she also goes to sleep in the parental bed. When Dad tries to sleep in his own bed there isn't any room, so he sleeps in Ruby's bed, where he is joined by Little Rick—who kicks. Dad climbs into the top bunk, but that doesn't work because it's "full of cuddlies and books and pointy puzzle pieces and besides . . . Dad wanted to sleep in his own bed." It's hard to say who will see themselves more clearly in this tale of musical beds, the kids who start it or the grownups who end it (echoing the experience of many long-suffering parents, Dad finally picks up each child and tucks each one into his or her very own bed). The plot structure is simple but effective: one child sets off another like a row of toppling dominoes, until the grownups straighten them all up again. The art is stylistically similar to Helen Oxenbury's in its big round shapes and expressive dot-eyed faces, but the opaque colors are more thickly laid on, giving the figures more intense color and more density and weight. The large pictures, easily seen by a group, will make this a favorite with the pajama storytime crowd. The text is straightforward and funny, and the familiar situation will surely draw snickers from past (and future) musical-bed miscreants. JMD

BERRY, JAMES, comp. *Around the World in Eighty Poems*; illus. by Katherine Lucas. Chronicle, 2002 96p

ISBN 0-8118-3506-5 \$19.95

R Gr. 3-6

Berry takes a literal as well as literary approach in this volume, traveling across continents and islands, from the Arctic to England, in this geographical poetic

journey. Contributions come from old hands at national representation (Federico García Lorca, Rabindranath Tagore, Jacques Prévert) but also some lesser-known names, and a goodly proportion of material is traditional to its region. Most poems feature child-appealing topics such as food (John Agard's "Snow-cone"), animals (Albert Wendt's "Flying Fox"), or family (Ke Yan's "Isn't It . . ."), demonstrating the global universality of such concerns; some poems aren't particularly distinctive, but there are plenty of eloquent lyrics, readaloud opportunities, and vivid views of different parts of the world. Lucas' art is somewhat bland and occasionally overly young for the concepts in the poems, but the landscapes are evocative and the spot art festive. The opening map provides an enlightening as well as appealing geographical guide to the included verses. Each poet's country is provided in the table of contents as well as with his or her poem, though there is no further biographical information; an index of poem titles is included. DS

BIBLE *Noah's Ark*; ad. and illus. by Jerry Pinkney. SeaStar, 2002 34p

Library ed. ISBN 1-58717-202-X \$16.50

Trade ed. ISBN 1-58717-201-1 \$15.95

R 4-8 yrs

The story of Noah's ark is a staple of children's literature; artists from Zwerger to Wildsmith have brought their vision to the Biblical story of the great flood. Here Pinkney brings his considerable experience to bear on the same tale, and the result is a powerful picture book that reiterates tradition and emphasizes nature in all its variety. The short sentences and phrases sometimes lean toward chopiness, but overall this rhythmic retelling has the cadence of a told story or sermon ("Two by two they came, all the animals of the earth. They came to the ark where Noah waited. And Noah welcomed them. They followed him into the ark, and God closed the door behind them"). The cumulative power of the events is evident in the storytelling; that power is also evident in the colored pencil and watercolor illustrations. The figures of Noah and his family, solidly and effectively drafted, have a Biblical authority that makes them seem slightly larger than life; their minuscule size in the ark scene therefore offers a dramatic contrast to the ark itself, which pushes the boundaries of the full spread devoted to it. Ultimately, the natural world takes center stage here: from huge beasts that consume compositional space to tiny spiders whose webs delicately span the pages, Pinkney's renderings of animals great and small bring home the glory of the ark's passengers. The flood scenes, whether under or above water, are particularly evocative: great whales and sharks swim through cities drowned in blue water; the ark itself rests on light-reflecting seas that go on forever. In the end, the divine promise is reiterated, and Noah and his family come to rest on an enduring Earth. This is sure to become a favorite version of the familiar tale. JMD

BLACK, HOLLY *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale*. Simon, 2002 310p

ISBN 0-689-84924-9 \$16.95

R Gr. 9-12

Sixteen-year-old Kaye returns to the home of her youth (her maternal grandmother's house) with her rock-and-roll musician mother. Once there Kaye seeks out her old school friend, Janet, and then she seeks out even older friends—the faeries that used to visit her when she was a girl. Finding them isn't easy; in fact, it isn't until she saves the life of dark faerie knight Roiben that her faerie friends contact her with a message: "Do not talk to the black knight anymore. tell no one your name. everything is danger." Her fascination with the faeries of her youth combined with

her fascination with Roiben proves irresistible, and Kaye finds herself willingly drawn into the battle between the Seelie and Unseelie courts of Faery, a battle that will culminate on Samhain with the paying of the Tithe to bind the "solitary fey" to one court or the other for another seven years. Walking confidently in the shadow of Charles de Lint and Emma Bull, the author places her fantasy squarely in the midst of urban decay and development, and her characters—disaffected, rough-tongued modern youth and ancient, twisted fey—are right out of VH-1's darker rock moments. Kaye, despite her own emotional confusion, is one tough, semi-Goth cookie who knows how to use her wits and learns how to use her magic (it turns out she's a pixie changeling). Her quest for true love, true friendship, and truth in general, while predictably successful, still makes one wild ride. Hand this to teens seeking a melding of Annette Curtis Klause and Francesca Lia Block. JMD

BLACKER, TERENCE *The Angel Factory*. Simon, 2002 216p
ISBN 0-689-85171-5 \$16.95

R Gr. 5-8

It's bad enough that Thomas Wisdom finds out that the encrypted document on his father's computer is a record of his adoption. It's even worse, though, to learn that his so, so perfect adopted family isn't even human but a group of angels on a Project to save humankind from its self-destructive tendencies. The angelic mission may be well intended, but those in charge at the Seraph organization won't let meddling mortals stand in the way of planetary improvement. Thomas' math teacher, who broke the encryption, is "accidentally" snuffed by angels on the local police force, and Thomas, who has been waffling about whether to support the Project, may be their next target. Blacker has the pacing of his supernatural spy thriller nailed, and even Thomas' hokey outbursts ("What madness had led me to follow Mum and Dad into their own underworld?") can't slow the reader's romp through the short, cliffhanging chapters. Blacker does, however, miss an opportunity to take his own premise a bit more seriously. There's no sustained examination of devilish means justifying heavenly ends here, and even the angels themselves are no more than aliens from another planet, complete with life-support implants and gizmos to shut down their systems. A derivative ending, in which the righteousness of a single human induces the aliens to call off their troops, could come right out of *Star Trek* (or, for that matter, *Genesis* or *Jeremiah*). However, readers who can pardon the theological oversights will be more than content with a light thriller that moves at the speed of a runaway train. EB

BOLING, KATHARINE *New Year Be Coming!: A Gullah Year*; illus. by Daniel Minter. Whitman, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-8075-5590-8 \$15.95

R 6-10 yrs

The distinctive poetry and flexible pronouns of the dialect still spoken by isolated communities of African Americans on islands along the southern coast come through in brief impressionistic descriptions of each month, from January when "the sky the color of first dark/ and the trees all naked in the wood" to June when "every gal child take off 'e shoes/ when 'e get off the yellow big bus" to December when "daybreak poke slow" and the new year, when it's time to "stir up the hopping John." Lively text is enhanced by dynamic figures in varied compositions: the predominant black of the dramatic linoleum-block prints frames the shadowy swamp while watercolors in a basic crayon palette (red, purple, blue, orange, green,

brown) add light and depth. An introductory note provides historical context; a glossary at the end follows a straightforward recipe for Hopping John. Its varied curricular uses and aesthetic pleasures make this compact package certain to instruct and delight. FK

BRIGGS, RAYMOND *Ug: Boy Genius of the Stone Age*; written and illus. by Raymond Briggs. Knopf, 2002 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-375-91611-3 \$17.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-375-81611-9 \$15.95

R Gr. 3-6

Ug dwells in the Stone Age, but unlike his stolid and accepting parents, the young lad isn't content with things as they are. He's got fancy ideas for the usual breakfast of "bits of dead animals" ("Og says he's had HOT dead animal bits," says Ug hopefully), he doesn't like living in caves, and, strangest of all, he's dissatisfied with his trousers made of stone, instead yearning for something soft ("He's always going on about SOFT!" complains his fed-up mother). Briggs plays fast, loose, and funny with anthropology and then jokes about the play, footnoting his anachronisms with more wisecracks ("In the Stone Age people could not read or write. This is why Dug's spelling is so poor"). The relentless silliness of the contrast between little Ug's contemporarily reasonable hopes and his parents' contemporarily realistic but historically tinged fussing over their young dreamer ("He'll go mad, that boy. He'll end up painting animals on the wall") will strike young readers as hilarious, as will Ug's doomed querying of the status quo (he doesn't even get his non-stone trousers). Briggs' sturdy panel art features sturdy, globular Stone-Ageoids bare except for their stone trousers (Ug's mother's name of "Dugs" is apt indeed) and occasionally just plain bare; the panels keep the pace quick and manage to bring both humor and pathos to Ug's ridiculous prehistoric world. This is broadly snortworthy, a happy historical aberration perfect for disrupting the back of the bus on the museum field trip or raucous enjoyment anytime. DS

BYARS, BETSY *Keeper of the Doves*. Viking, 2002 121p

ISBN 0-670-03576-9 \$14.99

R* Gr. 3-6

Amen McBee, so named by a father exasperated at the birth of his sixth daughter, has always been aware of Mr. Tominski, the reclusive man who holds a vague sinecure with her family. She's rarely seen him, though, and most of her knowledge comes from the frightening tales told by her older sisters, particularly the twins who delight in scaring Amen (and themselves) with dark, dramatic fantasies. Amen's first real encounter with Mr. Tominski is far from menacing; he evidently speaks no English, but he does communicate that he would like Amen to take his photograph with her new camera, and his delight at their meeting subtly amends her view of him and of her sisters' veracity. The twins' tales continue, however, and when the family dog is found dead, the older girls' self-inflamed imaginations lay the blame on Mr. Tominski, and their voiced suspicions drive the man to take his own life. Byars' story, set in 1899 Kentucky, is far less a dark tale of dangerous exaggeration and suicide than a tender coming-of-age story, and although an implicit caution against loose accusations lurks immediately beneath the surface, the focus is on Amen, her discovery of her father's integrity and devotion to Mr. Tominski, and her realization that she can and should rely on her own judgment. The tale unfolds in a series of brief chapters, loosely organized with alphabetical allusions, that segue so smoothly that even readers just embarking on "real" novels

will find themselves drawn effortlessly along. As the McBees rejoice at the birth of baby Adam, Amen quietly begins to mentor him, as her sisters once mentored her. Readers can be certain that Adam's education is in gentle, capable hands. EB

CADNUM, MICHAEL *The Leopard Sword*. Viking, 2002 195p
ISBN 0-670-89908-9 \$15.99

R Gr. 8-12

Hubert, Sir Nigel's squire and protagonist of *The Book of the Lion* (BCCB 2/00), here returns—literally, in fact, since he, Sir Nigel, and their comrades are returning to England from their bloody crusade in the Holy Land. Men trained and eager to fight seldom lead a peaceful existence, however: Saracens and a near-fatal quarrel with a Frankish knight dog their sea journey; after a shipwreck, they find themselves in Rome, where the comrades-at-arms become involved in a local power struggle and Hubert wins the favor of a young lady. Worst of all, their return to England brings the news that Prince John has seized the reins of power and that Hubert's best friend and fellow squire, Edmund, awaits punishment as a counterfeiter unless Hubert can win his freedom in combat. Like its predecessor, this title manages to deal squarely with the brutality of this corner of history ("The knight knelt over his attacker and, taking a swine butcher's care, cut his throat") while also conveying the excitement that made young people wish to be a part of it—and makes them want to read about it. Hubert's adventures are historically credible and tactfully shaped into narrative without losing their rough and unpolished appeal, and characterization is sufficient to allow for empathy (and, in the case of Sir Nigel's fellow knight Sir Rannulf, mystery) without ever interfering with pace or action. Even away from the controversial battles of the Crusade itself, Cadnum retains a perspective that allows for doubts and ambivalence about the knights, their mission, and even their king without tipping into a contemporary author's political preaching about the past. He's also left some loose ends that dangle invitingly, begging for a third book to continue the adventure; readers will certainly hope for one. DS

CALETTI, DEB *The Queen of Everything*. Simon Pulse, 2002 372p
Paper ed. ISBN 0-7434-3684-9 \$6.99

R* Gr. 9-12

See this month's Big Picture, p. 185, for review.

CANNON, A. E. *Charlotte's Rose*. Lamb, 2002 246p
Library ed. ISBN 0-385-90057-0 \$17.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-72966-9 \$15.95

R Gr. 5-8

Charlotte Edwards and her recently widowed father join their fellow Welsh converts to Mormonism on the long journey to Zion, or Salt Lake City, and while the party is united in faith, they are also frankly relieved to grab an opportunity to leave their arduous, perilous lives in the Welsh coal mines behind. Upon reaching Iowa they form a handcart train and begin to literally push their way across the plains. A young mother dies on route and her grieving husband refuses to acknowledge his newborn daughter; thirteen-year-old Charlotte impulsively volunteers to tend the baby, whom she names Rose, hoping to gain the respect of the adult women in her group. A widow with her own baby nurses little Rose, but the rest of the infant's care is in Charlotte's hands, and despite the sporadic assistance of other overburdened women on the trail, Charlotte quickly learns that child care

undermines every aspect of her life, from getting an uninterrupted night's sleep to flirting with a prospective beau. The only thing worse than caring for Rose is the thought of losing her, and Charlotte is plagued by the constant dread that disease—or Rose's father—will snatch the baby away. Plenty of authors have spurred fictional pioneers West, but Cannon goes beyond the customary litany of blistered feet, dust storms, wayside burials, and buffalo stampedes. Her reimagining of the often-overlooked handcart migration of the 1850s makes covered wagon trains look like a luxury vacation, and her vision of a young teen snarled in the claims of adolescence and the demands of adulthood is perceptive and convincing. EB

CARPENTER, ANGELICA SHIRLEY *Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking Glass*. Lerner, 2002 128p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-8225-0073-6 \$25.26 R Gr. 7-12

The Reverend Mr. Dodgson receives a respectable biographical treatment in this compact account of his life and influence. Carpenter covers the author/mathematician's childhood but understandably focuses more on his adulthood, including not just his writing and his child-friends, but also his engagement in college politics (often in opposition to the Dean of Christ Church, Alice's father) and his adult friendships. The book doesn't really break any new ground, but it's reflective of contemporary research and changing views, and it rises above many older clichés: this isn't the hackneyed picture of Lewis Carroll, Wounded Soul, but rather a more complicated view of a man whose life contained pleasures and successes as well as disappointments. Controversial matters, whether it be Dodgson's nude photographic studies or his possibly intimate friendship with Gertrude Chataway, aren't shirked, but they're addressed in context and without undue speculation. The text could use a bit more polish in spots: quotes are awkwardly spliced in, the focus sometimes jumps around, and at least one name (that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti) is consistently misspelled. Overall, however, this is a capable and detailed work that offers a useful midpoint between simple biographies for younger readers and denser adult material. Included are detailed endnotes, a bibliography of material by Carroll and a list of additional resources about him, and an index; photographs (many of them Dodgson's) and illustrations from Carroll's work appear throughout. DS

CARUS, MARIANNE, comp. *Fire and Wings: Dragon Tales from East and West*; illus. by Nilesh Mistry. Cricket, 2002 147p
ISBN 0-8126-2664-8 \$17.95 R Gr. 3-6

From the fiery orange and gold image on the cover to the black-and-white interior illustrations, from the generous-sized font to the easy-on-the-eyes white borders, this is a collection made to order for the older transitional reader. The subject—dragons—is a popular one, and there is something to please almost everyone in the varied stories. Geraldine McCaughrean's "Thoughts of a Drought Dragon" combines lyrical language with breakneck pacing to tell the tale of young boy who (literally) gets inside the mind of a dragon to save his village from destruction; Joan Lennon's "Skivvy and Cuttle" offers slapstick action and irreverent humor; Julia Pferdehirt's "Nothing at All" offers a heroine whose nerve is strong enough to engage in a silent battle of wits with a marauding fire-breather. Although a few of the entries are retellings of traditional tales, most of the fifteen stories are original, including E. Nesbit's classic, "The Last of the Dragons"; twelve were previously

published in *Cricket* magazine. Mistry's stylized black-and-white illustrations strike a balance between stately and humorous. The occasional cartoony characterization may jar, but on the whole the images have a soft, controlled sophistication. The collection sporadically suffers from lack of qualitative consistency, but the best of the tales meld a sense of humor with a taste for magic; readers, storytellers, and readers aloud will appreciate the combination. A section of author biographies concludes the volume. JMD

CHABON, MICHAEL *Summerland*. Miramax/Hyperion, 2002 500p
ISBN 0-7868-0877-2 \$22.95 R Gr. 6-10

Though most of Clam Island has the foggy, rainy weather expected on a small island in Puget Sound, the westernmost tip, a place the locals call Summerland, is an exception—until one summer it rains on Summerland, and the natural order of the known universes goes awry. That summer, eleven-year-old Ethan Feld, the worst player on the Roosters baseball team, is recruited by Ringfinger Brown. Brown is not a baseball scout, he's a hero scout, and Ethan is his choice for preventing Coyote, a.k.a. the Changer, from destroying the Lodgepole (the great Tree that holds the universes) and bringing on Ragged Rock, the end of the world. A skeptical Ethan and company (a hodgepodge band consisting of one girl pitcher, one fairy chieftain, one female Sasquatch, one rebellious fairy princess, one changeling, one miniature giant, one thieving wererat, and one almost-washed-up Cuban baseball star) race across magical boundaries and into parallel worlds to stop the Changer (here personified as Coyote, but representing cultural tricksters from Loki to Lucifer) from poisoning the well that feeds the Tree that holds the universes. Encounters with giants, fairies, and figures from American tall tales result in battle by baseball, as the motley crew turns into a team that can beat even Coyote and his band of demon players. Chabon borrows freely from Native American mythology, American tall tales, and Celtic folklore. The lyrical images of summer and baseball are reminiscent of early Ray Bradbury; the mythic images of good and evil are straight out of Norse mythology, from Ragged Rock/Ragnarok to the Lodgepole/Yggdrasil to Coyote/Loki. The opening meanders, but Chabon's pace picks up to a decent lope about a quarter of the way through. The trick to this novel is to enjoy the journey (at nearly 500 pages this no short trip); those readers who aren't in a hurry will do just that. JMD

CLEMENTS, ANDREW *A Week in the Woods*. Simon, 2002 190p
ISBN 0-689-82596-X \$16.95 Ad Gr. 4-6

Mark doesn't want to leave his friends and move to New Hampshire, and he resents his busy-with-business parents for making him switch schools mid-year. His attitude in his new school is less than stellar: he's already been accepted to a fancy prep school so he has little interest in doing well in class or in making new friends. By the time the annual fifth grade "Week in the Woods" comes around, however, Mark has come around too, and he's willing to make some effort. That effort is too late for science teacher Mr. Maxwell, who has written Mark off as a spoiled rich kid who needs to be taught a lesson and who considers himself just the man to teach it. When Maxwell mistakenly blames Mark for the presence of a knife in his cabin and orders him to the truck for the obligatory ride home, Mark takes his new camping gear and sets out up the mountain trail instead. Maxwell, belatedly discovering his error, goes after Mark; boy and teacher reach rapprochement after

Mark rescues an injured Mr. Maxwell. The first half of this novel is a plodding setup of the personalities of Mark and Maxwell, and the conflict between the two is poorly rendered, consisting mostly of erroneous, internal assumptions. The action finally picks up during the fifth-grade trip, however, and then it's a fast, fairly adventurous hike to the conclusion. Those readers seeking a challenge on par with Mark's field trip may find themselves feeling at home in these woods, if they've got the patience to make it to the trailhead. JMD

COOPER, MICHAEL *Remembering Manzanar: Life in a Japanese Relocation Camp*. Clarion, 2002 [68p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-618-06778-7 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-8

Of the more than 112,000 Japanese Americans forced to evacuate their homes in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack, over 10,000 were sent to Manzanar, a dust-swept "apple orchard" in eastern California. The book details the hasty camp construction, the living arrangements for internees, and the gradual evolution of community—with both its cooperation and deep divisions—amid makeshift conditions. Plenty of black-and-white photos by government-employed photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams will keep younger readers moving steadily through the text, and Cooper alerts viewers to the fact that pictures were examined and possibly censored before their release; his observations, however, are not always borne out by the selections (that Lange's work "shows the anxiety in the faces of men and women," for instance). He spends a fair amount of time in breathy commentary on the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage and the inherent dangers of repeating the evacuees' tragedy in the wake of the September 11th attacks, but he leaves the Japanese Americans' tale abruptly with the closing of the camp in November 1945, never mentioning the uphill task many of the now-homeless residents faced in returning to American society. For a more complete and balanced examination of the relocation, Jerry Stanley's *I Am an American* (BCCB 11/94) remains the title of choice. EB

CRAFT, MAHLON F., ad. *Sleeping Beauty*; illus. by Kinuko Y. Craft. SeaStar, 2002 32p

Library ed. ISBN 1-58717-121-X \$16.50

Trade ed. ISBN 1-58717-120-1 \$15.95

R 6-10 yrs

K. Y. Craft has already made a lasting impression on fairy-tale lovers with her romantic renditions of tales such as *Cinderella* (BCCB 1/00), and she will not disappoint fans of her elaborately illustrated volumes with this new work. Full-page and full-spread oil over watercolor paintings glow with Maxfield Parrish-like light; the elaborate compositions feature royalty in bejeweled gowns posing in elaborately draped rooms while bits of loose magic glow through the air like fireflies. The text draws strongly on the ballet, and the tableaux similarly suggest the drama of stage productions; while the illustrations tend towards the derivative (and they occasionally offer more intricacy than impact), overall the sheer theatricality of the scenes is impressive. Illuminated capitals and tendril-like frames set off the text boxes; unfortunately the font itself is attenuated and thin, making the text difficult to read. The adaptation of the story is fairly standard, holding to tradition rather than to any unique reimagining, but the retelling is not really the point here: the point is the lush, rococo illustrations that will delight the romantic at heart, young and old. JMD

CUMMINGS, PAT, ad. *Ananse and the Lizard: A West African Tale*; ad. and illus. by Pat Cummings. Holt, 2002 40p
ISBN 0-8050-6476-1 \$16.95 R 5-9 yrs

Whoever guesses the name of the Chief's beautiful daughter wins her as his wife, and Ananse the spider is determined to be her groom. Once in the Chief's village, Ananse brags his way into a place to stay with an easily impressed grasshopper, but the grasshopper's larder leaves much to be desired, and while Ananse searches for food he accidentally discovers the name of the Chief's daughter. The spider's ego leads to his downfall, however; a wily lizard, playing on Ananse's pride, tricks him into revealing the girl's name. When Ananse arrives to win his bride, he finds her already claimed—by the lizard. Cummings' retelling is fluid and smooth, and it's entertaining to see trickster Ananse get his comeuppance (although it does seem a bit hard on the chief's lizard-marrying daughter). The watercolor, gouache, and colored-pencil illustrations are more detailed than Cummings' usual oversized graphics but still suitable for viewing by groups; the changing perspectives, from Ananse's point of view to panoramic views from above, make each spread an eyeopener. The animal and human characterizations are full of expression, and Ananse has a round-cheeked audacity that especially suits him. Cummings' research into this story is mentioned in the jacket copy, but no specific source is given. JMD

DOYLE, EUGENIE *Stray Voltage*. Front Street, 2002 133p
ISBN 1-886910-86-3 \$16.95 R Gr. 5-8

Eleven-year-old Ian can't quite find his place on the family's Vermont dairy farm. He's always been his mother's helper, closer to the house than the barn and carrying out any dairying chores under her supervision, but it's becoming increasingly clear that Mom's extended visit to relatives is a permanent move. Dad, never much of a talker, has no time—or use—for Ian, and his near-heroic efforts to keep the farm going are undercut at every turn by the falling price of milk and the freak electrical shocks that streak through the milking barn floor, debilitating the cows. A series of sixth-grade news-report assignments gives Ian a broader view of the world outside his farm, and as his father and older brother struggle to keep a toe-hold on the business, Ian slowly begins to envision the possibility of taking responsibility for his own future. Doyle presents a view of modern farm life reminiscent of *A Thousand Acres*; there's acute and sympathetic realism in the depiction of the changing life of the farm, where the family livelihood is sapped from underground and even the most iron-fisted patriarch must bow to the force of the marketplace. Ian does make his way beyond the bleakness of his mother's abandonment and his father's estrangement, though, and his hard-won resolve to set his own goals is satisfying and right. EB

ELLIS, DEBORAH *A Company of Fools*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2002 191p
ISBN 1-55041-719-3 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 4-7

Henri, a choir student at a fourteenth-century French Benedictine monastery, records his memories of the year in which an orphaned urchin, Micah, was brought to the school to have his profane but glorious voice redirected to the service of God. Micah blows into St. Luc's like a hurricane, crowing ribald street songs, dancing on the refectory tables, wearying his classmates with his endless boasting. Henri is assigned as his companion, and under Micah's influence, the boy becomes a gleeful co-conspirator in all manner of antics, from lacing the communion wine

with a foul-tasting herb, to “serving” a drugged live pig as the main course at the visiting bishop’s dinner. When the plague strikes the surrounding area, the abbot sends some of the choirboys and monks out among the people as a Company of Fools, entertaining the tense, depressed populace with comic parodies of monastery life. A nobleman whose daughter happens to recover from the plague claims that Micah’s angelic voice saved her, and carefree Micah suddenly finds himself a pawn in an escalating plan to swell St. Luc’s coffers with the offerings of desperate people. Henri’s narration begins in the formal tone of a medieval chronicle, then inexplicably devolves into prose befitting a modern-day school story. Indeed, Ellis seems more comfortable with schoolboy pranking than taking on the grim business of bubonic plague, and Henri is unnaturally reticent on the subject of friends and mentors lost to the epidemic. Still, the sudden, devastating changes wrought by the plague on orderly monastic life is ably captured, and middle-graders fascinated by matters medieval will want to add this to their reading list. EB

ERDRICH, LISE *Bears Make Rock Soup and Other Stories*; illus. by Lisa Fifield. Children’s Book Press, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-89239-172-3 \$16.95 Ad 5-8 yrs

In this collection of animal and animal/human stories, fourteen brief original tales are partnered with the paintings that inspired them. According to notes, both author Erdrich (of Ojibway heritage) and illustrator Fifield (Oneida) seek to honor their cultural traditions in this work, and there is indeed a strong folkloric flavor to matter-of-factly fabulous tales of bears, moose, Canada geese; there’s also the recurring figure of Deer Chief, who appears in several episodes, the first the story of his naming and the last the account of the animals’ paying him their last respects. The text’s quiet mysticity suits this intermingled natural world of people and animals, and a few entries offer satisfyingly condensed drama, such as the story of the crows’ battle assistance (“Crows Cawed a Warning”) and the tale of a family’s escape with the birds (“Keepers of the Sky”). Most stories, however, suffer from the conciseness, abruptly switching focus mid-page and trailing off rather than ending. Fifield’s earthtoned watercolors depict a decoratively stylized but never fussy landscape, where animal faces are more expressive than those of people and balanced compositions give animal gatherings a stately if somewhat stolid pagantry. There’s no specific commentary on the folkloric or cultural background of art or text, but a brief note on some of the featured animals is included. DS

FANELLI, SARA *Mythological Monsters of Ancient Greece*; written and illus. by Sara Fanelli. Candlewick, 2002 27p
ISBN 0-7636-1907-8 \$16.99 R Gr. 3-6

Fanelli has selected fourteen monsters from Greek mythology and given them a whole new look. Her selection includes individual beasts such as Argus, Medusa, and Echidna, as well as some less specific entries such as harpies, sirens, and satyrs. Nearly all the monsters get their own spread (sirens and harpies, centaurs and satyrs have to share) and a collage portrait that will have readers reaching for magazines, scissors, and glue. The hand-lettered text is kept to a gleeful minimum (an appended page of notes gives some additional information), just enough to whet the reader/viewer’s appetite for more. While one might argue the inclusion of centaurs and Pegasus as monsters, the novel artistic approach to these usually classically restrained icons buys Fanelli a great deal of aesthetic flexibility. Various cut

papers, printed texts, and photographic bits constitute the monsters, with flourishes of ink and paint adding details that imbue the compositions with offbeat humor. This title definitely needs either informed readers or supplementary materials (a list of additional reading titles would have been helpful), but there is enough visual mischief and mayhem happening here to keep even the most impatient browser amused. A brief concluding quiz on images in the collages will take readers back through the pages for another look. JMD

FEIFFER, JULES *The House across the Street*; written and illus. by Jules Feiffer. di Capua/Hyperion, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-7868-0910-8 \$15.95

R 5-8 yrs

Our narrator lives across from a "big, big house where it's better than here." The boy in that house leads the life about which the speaker can only dream, with endless success ("He wins every game, he never comes in second"), wonderful possessions ("He's got a shark for a pet that he keeps in his swimming pool"), indulgent parents ("He can eat with his elbows on the table"), and general joy ("Everybody laughs in his house"). There's not much plot beyond the idealized vision (the book ends with the narrator's imagining of a friendship with his high-living neighbor), but this taps directly into the common youthful conviction that somebody's living the dream life you haven't managed to swing, and there's wit and aptness in the specifics of this particular paradise. Feiffer's wiggly, rumpled lines imbue the fantasy boy with a heedless insouciance (he's all the more perfect for being casual about it) while the narrator's window solidly frames his yearning views of the heaven that lies across the street. You can use this to spark all kinds of discussions, or just for a comfortingly masochistic confirmation that the grass really is greener elsewhere. DS

FERREIRA, ANTON *Zulu Dog*. Foster/Farrar, 2002 193p
ISBN 0-374-39223-4 \$16.00

Ad Gr. 6-9

Vusi, a Zulu boy, is smitten with one of the family hunting dog's new puppies, saving Gillette (named for the pup's razor-sharp teeth) after a leopard kills the rest of the pup's family and mangles one of Gillette's legs beyond repair. Vusi keeps Gillette a secret from his family, especially his dog-hating mother, but he's determined to train the three-legged dog to be a great hunter. He's got another, even riskier secret: a growing (if sometimes rocky) friendship with Shirley Montgomery, daughter of a racist white farmer; when Shirley disappears, Vusi braves Mr. Montgomery's wrath to help search for her. There's an old-fashioned flavor to much of the story, especially Gillette and Vusi's melodramatic rescue of Shirley (who not only has an injured ankle preventing her from walking, but who is on the verge of becoming the victim of a hungry leopard); Mr. Montgomery is a flat character both as a racist and, after Vusi's actions elicit a sentimental reformation, as a reformed racist. There's still plenty of enjoyment in the classic dog story; readers will easily understand both Vusi's need to prove himself a man and his need to ensure Gillette's survival through their value as hunters. Even more compelling is the picture of Vusi's life as South Africa struggles to deal with political change: Vusi learns English in school but has little chance or reason to master it until he meets Shirley; his father's taxi business in Pietermaritzburg is threatened by murderous competitors, forcing him to steal cattle from local ranchers in order to feed his family. Readers willing to wade through the trappings will find at the

heart a solid boy-and-dog adventure and an interesting view of a life rarely depicted in U.S. children's literature. A map and a glossary are included. DS

FIEDLER, LISA *Dating Hamlet: Ophelia's Story*. Holt, 2002 183p
ISBN 0-8050-7054-0 \$16.95 M Gr. 7-10

The title isn't a metaphor; this is Ophelia's story, or a version thereof, telling the truth behind the famous saga of the melancholy Dane and his doomed love. There's little melancholy in Fiedler's novel, however, which turns the famous pairing's travails into a jokey period comedy and Ophelia into a knowing witness and accomplice from the ghostly get-go. She's a partner in Hamlet's plans to feign madness and to entrap his murdering stepfather into revealing himself, and she plays her own role to perfection, going "mad" herself and then using herbal potions (a legacy of her late mystical mother) to put herself into a deathlike state from which she's awakened in time to do the same to just about everybody else with the complicity of just about everybody else. There are certainly possibilities for curricular use here, and the book's conscious motif-crossing may amuse some readers (at the end, Ophelia suggests that they light out for Verona, where there's an apothecary who'd be interested in her potion), but ultimately this is too leaden to be silly and too superficial to be interesting. Fiedler (a talented author of contemporary comedy such as *Curtis Piperfield's Biggest Fan*, BCCB 10/95) jettisons period authenticity without ever creating an effectively cohesive world, comic or serious, for her characters to inhabit instead. The presumably deliberate contrast between archaic language and modern colloquialisms (Barnardo is "a few knights short of a Crusade," Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are "several fathoms shallow of a full moar") wears thin quickly, and the lustings of a multitude of characters after Ophelia veer uneasily between sinister and humorously bawdy; nor does the book ever reconcile the darkness of the revenge plot, Claudius' eventual murder, and Ophelia's own genuinely troubled family story (she discovers that the gravedigger, not Polonius, is her father) with the forced breeziness of the tangled web of pretense. There's an interesting idea at the heart of this, but overall kids would be better off with *Kiss Me, Kate* or *West Side Story*. DS

FLIEGER, VERLYN *Pig Tale*. Hyperion, 2002 [336p]
ISBN 0-7868-0792-X \$16.99
Reviewed from galleys

M Gr. 9-12

Abandoned in a field as an infant, Mokie (from "mochyn," the Welsh word for pig) grows up an abused and neglected foster child, working as a pig herder. After being raped by the village boys, Mokie flees into the woods, and her destiny begins to unfold. Fairy folk disguised as gypsies take her in; their job is to bring Mokie to full knowledge of herself so she will be ready to fulfill her role in the inevitable and unchanging "pattern." In the end, Mokie becomes the perfect sacrifice in the rites that mark the changing of the seasons, dying in place of her pig and stepping into the Crystal Land where she is greeted by one of the fairy folk. The atmosphere of this novel is compelling, but the plot relies too heavily on its unexplained mythological base. Since Mokie's death is part of a known pattern with a known end, there is no real tension or suspense, and the fairy folk's asides on Mokie's origins and destiny slow the plot further. Despite Flieger's convincing creation of her cold, hard world, the novel ultimately lacks impact and momentum; adventurous fantasy readers will be better served by Black's *Tithe*, reviewed above. JMD

GARDEN, NANCY *Meeting Melanie*. Farrar, 2002 199p
ISBN 0-374-34943-6 \$16.00

Ad Gr. 5-7

Allie Ward is eleven going on twelve and unenthused by recent changes: her male friends no longer include her in their work or play, and her father tells her that she won't be strong enough to work, like him, as a lobsterman. To make matters worse, Allie's injured father hasn't been able to work for months; as a result, Allie's younger siblings must leave the island to stay with their aunt while Allie helps her folks sell baked goods to summer visitors. When Melanie, an outgoing girl her own age, comes to the island for the summer, the course of true friendship is complicated by a parent's class snobbery and, in subtler ways, by the strength of Allie's possible sexual feelings for Melanie. Though there are no clear signs that this is an historical novel (or that it is not), the prevailing social attitudes on the island—and the plot lines inspired by them—are distinctly old-fashioned, in spite of the author's attention to sexuality and ethnicity, and sometimes melodramatic. Despite occasional authorial overstatement, Allie's conflict with traditional gender roles is multifaceted and credible; she responds to the emphasis on women as "weak" (and the shock of getting her first period) by working out ("She couldn't do much about the woman part of her, she realized, but she could do plenty about the strong part"). The relationship of preteens Melanie and Allie never gets beyond the friends-forever stage (ending with a natural separation in August), but its emotional intensity and suggestion of deeper possibilities should also resonate for many readers. Stilted plotting aside, the well-defined characters and carefully evoked setting will appeal to readers beginning to explore their own identities. FK

GREENE, STEPHANIE *Falling into Place*. Clarion, 2002 124p
ISBN 0-618-17744-2 \$15.00

R Gr. 3-5

Eleven-year-old Margaret is sick of change: her beloved grandfather has died, her grandmother's moved to a retirement community, and her father has remarried and forced not only a stepmother but three little stepsisters on her. On top of that, there's a new baby coming, and Margaret's visit with her grandmother, where she'd hoped to be able to spill her sorrows, isn't at all what she expected: Gran isn't interested in doing much of anything but, uncharacteristically, carping about the neighbors, and Margaret is stuck with her younger cousin Roy. There's some convenient contrivance in the resolution (Margaret softens towards her half- and step-sibs and Gran towards her neighbors) and the book's shift from Margaret's displacement anxiety to her concerns about her grandmother is a bit dizzying, but the latter is actually a more interesting and unusual focus. Margaret is a sympathetic and strong-willed character ("The thing about bossing is," she informs a plaintively protesting Roy, "you're not supposed to ask the person whether they like it or not") whose righteous displeasure is legitimate and understandable. There's therefore a lot of emotional satisfaction here, and this will also have resonance for the many kids dealing with grandparental transitions. DS

GREGORY, VALISKA *Shirley's Wonderful Baby*; illus. by Bruce Degen. HarperCollins, 2002 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-028574-5 \$16.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028132-4 \$14.99

R 4-7 yrs

Pink sneakers (no bows, thank goodness) subtly indicate the gender of the grumpy young hippo whose "perfect" baby brother is effortlessly hogging the limelight.

Fortunately for Shirley, the new babysitter, Ms. Mump, seems to agree with her that babies—who are “notorious for waking up . . . being hungry . . . burping”—are definitely a bother and often “revolting.” Over the course of the evening, Shirley finds herself taking more and more responsibility for baby Stanley, changing him, feeding him, and eventually defending him (“I happen to know that for a baby it was a very good burp”). By the time Shirley’s folks get home, Ms. Mump can tell them that “as a sister, your Shirley is wonderful.” Gouache applied over stencils and mesh and then finished with pen and ink outlining creates subtle textures and well-defined patches of richly saturated color in dynamic but clearly focused illustrations; however, it’s Shirley’s body language as she watches her clueless parents dote on little Stanley that really sells the story. Viewers will also enjoy the few quiet jokes tucked into the pictures (the “thick book” Ms. Mump reads while Shirley amuses the baby is entitled “Thick Book,” while the books Shirley reads to Stanley have titles like “Pat the Hippo”). Solid storytelling and unassuming craftsmanship make this familiar familial drama a good bet to engage jaded siblings and their elders. FK

GRIFFIN, PENI R. *The Music Thief*. Holt, 2002 [160p]
ISBN 0-8050-7055-9 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-6

Alma is frustrated by family tensions: her mother is always working, her older brother is turning into a troublemaker with an interest in gang life, and her sister leaves her baby to Alma’s care most of the time. Already saddened by the death of her beloved grandmother, Alma finds a new grief when Jovita, the local girl turned famous and inspirational singer, is gunned down by gang-bangers. Desperate for contact with Jovita’s music but lacking any way to play her tapes, Alma sneaks into the house of her neighbor, a music teacher; the incursion leads to repetition, with Alma finding respite from her stressful life and an introduction into the broader world of music in the teacher’s empty house. There’s a fair amount of contrivance here, especially in Alma’s expanding musical horizons, but the easy and confiding storytelling makes this a compelling tale. Characterizations are perfunctory but not flat, so that Alma’s strained family is realistic in its troubles and in its family dynamic. As she has before (in books such as *A Dig in Time*, BCCB 10/91), Griffin capably depicts the South Texas world of Spanglish and mixed Anglo/Latino neighborhoods; here she adds poignancy with the figure of Jovita (obviously modeled on Selena) and the impact of her death on the community as well as on Alma. Young music lovers will particularly relate to this thoughtful yet accessible novel. DS

GRIMES, NIKKI *Talkin’ about Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*; illus. by E. B. Lewis. Orchard, 2002 48p
ISBN 0-439-35243-6 \$16.95

R Gr. 4-6

In the family parlor on Chicago’s South Side, relatives and friends of the early twentieth-century African-American aviatrix mourn her passing in a 1926 crash. Their voices, vividly imagined and individuated, offer deeply personal glimpses into Coleman’s life and steely character. Teachers and siblings, flight-school classmates, mentors, and promoters remember her drive to learn, her determination to make a mark in the aviation field, her resilience in facing discrimination and injury. Grimes’ vision is informative and challenging for intermediate-grade read-

ers, providing a subtler portrait than Borden's *Flying High* (BCCB 2/01). Several speakers provide an edgy counterpoint to the predictably laudatory views of the "mourners." A white customer from Bessie's days as a laundress remarks, "There was somethin' disturbin' about her. I think/ it was her eyes. She'd never look down, you know?" Bessie's sister-in-law decries her boastful ways: "But them dressed up tales she told!/ They hurt more than they helped, if you ask me./ Made it harder for folks to believe the plain truth/ of what she really did do—which was plenty." Each double-page-spread memoir includes a monochrome thumbnail portrait of the speaker and a luminous full-page watercolor scene from Bessie's life—lagging sullenly behind the other workers in the cotton fields, charting her future over a customer's nails in a Chicago manicure salon, staring pensively from her French flight school window with biplanes reflected in the glass overhead. Author's notes fill in details of Bessie's career and legacy, and source notes guide the way to further biographical and historical information. Readers who shy away from standard biographies may find this nontraditional rendering much to their liking. EB

HANLEY, VICTORIA *The Healer's Keep*. Holiday House, 2002 364p
ISBN 0-8234-1760-3 \$17.95 Ad Gr. 7-10

When the evil Lord Morlen buys seventeen-year-old Maeve, the slave girl flees, escaping with a disguise created by her dying mother and with the help of the Dreamwen Stone, a magical talisman. Her flight is also aided by freeman Jasper, who finds himself drawn to the beautiful girl. The story of the escaping Maeve is entwined with that of Princess Saravelda (known as Sara) and Dorjan, two young people of recently identified magical abilities, who have been sent to the Healer's Keep to learn the ways of power and who quickly discover that the Keep is under magical siege from Lord Morlen. Morlen is in league with the Shadow King, an evil entity attempting to regain his mortal shape and plunge the mortal world into darkness, and the heroes battle betrayal, subterfuge, illusion, and dark dreams to overcome the threat to the kingdom, defeat Morlen, and banish the Shadow King. Hanley began this saga in *The Seer and the Sword* (BCCB 2/01) with the introduction of Torina and Landen, now queen and king; this title picks up when Sara, the daughter of Torina and Landen, is grown to near-womanhood. The fantasy world is full of intriguing details; unfortunately, much of the magic lacks nuance, and it is often more convenient than logical, with the characterizations of the supernaturally gifted players relying more on magic than personality. The pace sometimes stalls, and the conclusion (in which Maeve uses her heretofore unrevealed power to defeat Morlen and then vows to use it to convince her country's ruler to end slavery forever) is a bit wishful. Still, the setting is interesting, the main characters are engaging, and fantasy readers untroubled by whimsical plotting will enjoy the scenery. JMD

HARTFIELD, CLAIRE *Me and Uncle Romie: A Story Inspired by the Life and Art of Romare Bearden*; illus. by Jerome Lagarrigue. Dial, 2002 40p
ISBN 0-8037-2520-5 \$16.99 R 6-9 yrs

James is uncertain about leaving his parents behind in North Carolina for a summer in New York City with his aunt and uncle (he's especially worried about spending his birthday away from home). Aunt Nanette's affection soon allows him to feel comfortable in his relatives' apartment, but when she's called away

unexpectedly, he's left only with Uncle Romie. Initially intimidated by his imposing artist uncle, James soon discovers he's a congenial companion and becomes intrigued by Romie's collage art, some of which depicts James'—and Romie's—North Carolina home. Uncle Romie is based on artist Romare Bearden, and some of the memories Uncle Romie shares with James are based on Bearden's art, but ultimately Bearden's connection to the book is fairly tenuous; fortunately, the fictional story stands on its own, offering a quiet and sympathetic account of a boy's discovery of his loving uncle and the powers of art. Lagarrigue wisely avoids imitating Bearden's style, instead offering subtle underlays of collage, mostly newspaper, that add richness and delicate patterning to the spreads. The striations of his orderly brushstrokes enhance the texture further, provide a feeling of three-dimensionality and order, and, in combination with his twilight palette and smeary acrylic hues, vividly recall the work of Degas. While this could serve as an introduction to a discussion about Bearden, it also offers an invitation to the world of art that would complement Brian Karas' *The Class Artist* (BCCB 9/01). A guide to making collage is included, as is a brief note about the life of Romare Bearden. DS

HERSHENHORN, ESTHER *Chicken Soup by Heart*; illus. by Rosanne Litzinger. Simon, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-689-82665-6 \$16.95

R 4-7 yrs

Rudie Dinkins, "a nice *boychik*," is distressed to find that his babysitter (Mrs. Gittel, "the Chicken Soup Queen") is down with the flu: "Who will snug-a-bug her like she snug-a-bugged me? Who will cook her chicken soup and make her good as new?" Determined to aid in Mrs. Gittel's recovery, Rudie (with his mother's help) makes a batch of chicken soup from Mrs. Gittel's own recipe. Lucky for Mrs. Gittel, Rudie knows her secret ingredient: she stirs in stories about her soon-to-be soup eaters to make her chicken soup "a little sweet." Rudie stirs in a candy kiss in memory of the day "they practiced counting like accountants," some jelly beans in memory of a day they played cards, and a peppermint in memory of the day the two of them took pictures in a photo booth. Each sweet memory of Mrs. Gittel must improve the soup because sure enough, not long after Mrs. Gittel eats Rudie's soup, she's as good as new—just in time to make Rudie chicken soup for his tummyache. Hershenhorn's story is both sweet and funny; the stories within the story run a smooth course, and the affectionate relationship between Rudie and neighbor Mrs. Gittel is clear from their obvious concern for one another. Litzinger's cartoony mixed-media illustrations (gouache, watercolor, and colored pencil) are a bit generic, but despite their lack of specificity they are cheery, splashy bits of color that liven up the pages. The Yiddish words and rhythms of the text make this a natural for reading aloud or even readers' theater. Both Rudie Dinkins' and Mrs. Gittel's chicken soup recipes are included at the end. Enjoy! JMD

JACKSON, ALISON *The Ballad of Valentine*; illus. by Tricia Tusa. Dutton, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-525-46720-3 \$16.99

R 5-8 yrs

Ever noticed that "Valentine" rhymes with "Clementine"? Jackson has, and she's developed a playfully mournful Valentine ballad around the fact. "In a cabin, in a canyon" lives the narrator's sweetheart, Valentine, whom he'd dearly like to make his very own Valentine. Unfortunately, his attempts to communicate this desire to her are fraught with obstacles: the mailman can't find her address, the homing

pigeon flies off to Madagascar, the wind blows away his skywriting, etc. The verse makes good use of the familiar drone and the repeated (if very slightly varied) rhyme ("But it rolled down into quicksand./ Now your valentine is slime"), and the catalogue of hapless disaster takes the embarrassment out of the hearts-and-flowers holiday. Tusa's line-and-watercolor illustrations bring the premise to life in sketchy scribbles and solid, frizzly lines that recall the work of David Small and in rugged dapples of color that suggest a slightly old-timey and more than slightly fantastical western reality, where carts may be drawn by massive and perky pigs. They also provide a reassuring counternarrative: the cheerful and industrious Valentine, oblivious to her suitor's trials, proceeds to whip up a tasty pie and bring it to the poor defeated narrator. You can get them in a classroom/ Singing with a wailing whine,/ They'll adore the glorious ruckus/ Never mind the valentine. DS

JOHNSON, KELLY *Look at the Baby*; written and illus. with photographs by Kelly Johnson. Holt, 2002 24p
ISBN 0-8050-6522-9 \$14.95 Ad 6-18 mos.

It's baby bits on display in this brief baby book: "Look at the baby./ Look at the baby's nose./ Look at the baby's fingers/ Look at the baby's toes." That's about as complicated as the text gets, so the result is rather a catalogue and a skimpy one at that; enterprising adults will nonetheless be able to turn it into a giggly sharing experience with kisses or tickles, especially on the "yum, yum, yummy!" exclamation (a phrase rather awkwardly shoehorned into the examination of the baby's legs). It's the crisp and vivid photographs that are the real draw here: up-close looks at fingers and toes are interesting in their own right, and there's an attractive multiracial cast of expressive, extremely photogenic kids (some, though, rather old to be called babies) peering out from the pages. This doesn't have the imaginative excellence of Helen Oxenbury's work for the youngest audiences, but it still offers an opportunity for some rollicking baby play. DS

KING-SMITH, DICK *Chewing the Cud*; illus. by Harry Horse and with photographs. Knopf, 2002 197p
Library ed. ISBN 0-375-91459-5 \$18.00
Trade ed. ISBN 0-375-81459-0 \$16.95 R Gr. 6-10

The prolific author now turns his pen to his own life, describing his childhood, his work adventures, his family life, and most importantly, his animals, from pigs (especially the noble boar, Monty) to guinea pigs, dogs (especially the maternal dachshund, Anna, and Sally the indestructible terrier) to Ben-the-bull. The narrative is shaped largely by the species of its subjects, meandering beneficently like the reminiscences of a kindly old uncle. There's an accompanying amiability that makes it hard to resist, however, and this offers a lot of the pleasures of James Herriot's country tales. There are wryly amusing observations of people ("Mr. Hamper was distinguishable from his larger pigs by virtue of wearing clothes and standing on his hind legs"), disarming honesty ("I wasn't a particularly good soldier or farmer or salesman or factory worker or teacher, but at last I've found something I can do reasonably well"), and an appreciation of the earthy side of animal husbandry (his three children dance solemnly in a circle around the mating Muscovy ducks). Throughout it all is the typical farmer's blend of affection and practicality, with animals appreciated both for their interesting personalities and their flavor when cooked in a savory sauce. Pleasantly homey line drawings appear throughout, and an inset of photographs is provided. DS

LYNCH, CHRIS *Who the Man*. HarperCollins, 2002 [192p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-623939-7 \$16.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-623938-9 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-9

Junior-high-schooler Earl Pryor is sensitive, to say the least, about his prodigious height and stubby chin, and that sensitivity, coupled with iron fists and a frozen moral compass (there is right; there is wrong; beat up the wrong) lands him in continual trouble. School grounds are fairly mined with defiant jabs about his size, and the most innocent trip to the local convenience store has its perils, as older teens and his insecure friend Bobby manipulate him into buying liquor for their back-alley party. Earl's in perpetual search of refuge, but school has him on probation, his loving parents—who no longer love each other—have fractured his home life, and even his hideaway is discovered and eventually trashed by other kids. Earl tries to steer along the straight and narrow, but when the weight of his world sends him into a drunken binge and a rage against his father, he and his parents are jolted into setting their lives into some kind of reasonable order. Although many readers may wish that the balance between events and Earl's subsequent rumination tipped a bit more toward action, they will appreciate Lynch's acute insights into the junior-high disparity between physical and social development, and the indistinct line between self-defense and self-control. For middle-schoolers familiar with the Elvin books (*Slot Machine* and *Extreme Elvin*, BCCB 10/95 and 2/99), this is an ideal segue into Lynch's darker offerings. EB

MAITLAND, BARBARA *The Bookstore Valentine*; illus. by David LaRochelle. Dutton, 2002 48p (Dutton Easy Readers)

ISBN 0-525-46913-3 \$13.99

R Gr. 1-3

Mr. Brown of the Black Cat Bookstore (devoted to ghost books) is overwhelmed with customers in the days before Valentine's Day, so he hires the estimable Miss Button, who loves ghost books, adores the resident cat, and enjoys the shop's ghost. She and Mr. Brown are clearly kindred spirits, but their shyness may keep them apart; fortunately, Cobweb the cat and his friends the mice are on hand to ensure the well-matched pair get together for Valentine's Day. Neat, straightforward text in tidy little chapters avoids making the romance too goopy, instead sticking to the lovely particulars of the ghostly bookstore *avec* cat. LaRochelle's line-and-watercolor illustrations are also neat and tidy, with amusing details such as the titles of the ghostly books (sure to entice youngsters into reading more than they'd planned) and the gambols of the frolicking mice in just about every spread. Even the anti-romantics will relish this accessible holiday tale. DS

MARRIN, ALBERT *Dr. Jenner and the Speckled Monster: The Search for the Smallpox Vaccine*. Dutton, 2002 120p illus. with photographs

ISBN 0-525-46922-2 \$17.99

R Gr. 5-8

Biological weaponry having moved out of the realm of the theoretical, smallpox is very much back in the news, so Marrin's examination of the virus' history, historical defeat, and contemporary significance is timely indeed. After an overview of the early ragings of smallpox, the book then focuses on the introduction of inoculation—mild infections of the virus that, often enough, left the subject immune—and then Dr. Jenner's successful work on a vaccine made from cowpox, which would confer immunity without endangering the vaccinee or his/her acquaintan-

ces. Examinations of the extirpation of the virus and contemporary threats conclude the narrative. This is a somewhat stolid account, and Marrin's emotionality when discussing contemporary issues seems at odds with his more objective historical reporting. Nonetheless, this is a well-considered investigation that provides both historic and scientific enlightenment. Photographs and reproductions of period art appear throughout; a detailed list of titles for further reading, a list of websites, and an index are included. DS

McCLURE, GILLIAN *Tom Finger*; written and illus. by Gillian McClure. Bloomsbury, 2002 32p
ISBN 1-58234-782-4 \$16.95 R 5-8 yrs

Young Queenie, in mourning for her "dear Tabby cat," can't quite give him up: "Every day Queenie called her Tabby, sadly she called her dear old Tabby. But Queenie's brother Ben said 'Stop calling your Tabby, he won't come back!'" Though Queenie's dear dead Tabby doesn't come back, another cat does: "He was young, he was bold, and his eyes were bright blue. 'You're not my Tabby, my dear old Tabby. Who are you?' Queenie said. 'Tom Finger,' this bold young Tabby replied." Bearing odd gifts for Queenie, Tom appears and disappears with a spooky regularity, until finally, despite the warnings of her suspicious younger brother, Queenie sets off in search of the mysterious Tom. She travels through a snowy winter landscape, hindered by an observing, feather-decorated, witch-like creature perched in the trees. Whether the witchy-creature is real or imaginary, when Queenie calls on Tom for help, she receives it; eventually she arrives safely at Tom Finger's home and meets his mistress, a kindly old woman who gives her a gift—a Tabby kitten with bright blue eyes. McClure's watercolors effectively employ their subdued palette, the blue and gray shadows touched by sparks of red ribbons and berries. The elongated, elegant Tom Finger has a rakish Puss-in-Boots air, and the rounded human figures charmingly recall Hummel figurines. The story itself remains a slightly spooky mystery up until the very end: "But Tom Finger had gone. In a blinking he'd gone. Not even his footprints were left in the snow." JMD

MCDONALD, JANET *Chill Wind*. Foster/Farrar, 2002 134p
ISBN 0-374-39958-1 \$16.00 Ad Gr. 7-12

Aisha Ingram previously appeared in McDonald's *Spell Bound* (BCCB 10/01), as the friend of Raven, the ambitious protagonist; now it's her turn in the spotlight. She's been contentedly stagnant, living with her two young children in her mother's apartment in the projects, but with her five years on welfare coming to an end she's got to find some other financial support or enroll in a workfare program. She tries everything to get out of her workfare obligation, but help isn't forthcoming from her relatives or her children's father, so she's stuck working on the subway patrol. The narration often seems unsure of its direction, with viewpoint, voice, and opinions changing quixotically; there's enough commitment to reality that the book's eventual shift into fairy tale (Aisha is discovered as a plus-size model, and she instantly makes it big with a commercial) fails to convince. Aisha's own character and dialogue remain strong and vibrant, however, and she's a seriously unusual heroine; the scene-setting is evocative and straightforward ("They felt like everybody looked down on project people, so wherever they went, they made sure to represent, and get respect: By always getting a seat on a packed train, even if it

meant snatching someone out of theirs"). The fame-and-riches ending may not be believable, but there's plenty of satisfaction in the Cinderella story, and readers sure that their big break is just around the corner will relish seeing Aisha get her chance. DS

MORANVILLE, SHARELLE BYARS *Over the River*. Holt, 2002 [240p]

ISBN 0-8050-7049-4 \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

Twelve-year-old Willa Mae has only dim memories of her mother, who died when Willa Mae was small, and even less recollection of her father, who joined the Navy to fight World War II and, two years after the end of the war, still hasn't returned. Though she wishes her grandparents and her young aunt, Rose, would tell her more about her parents, she's happy with life on their Illinois farm—until one day her father returns. Soon she's spirited off to Oklahoma, where her father hopes to find work as an electrician. She's terrifically homesick, but she's also enjoying being her loving father's daughter, learning to be his helper as he works and making a home with him. While the story's climax and the revelation of the family secret have a melodramatic contrivance at odds with the narrative's tone, Willa Mae's intimate and wondering narration retains its power, credibly evoking a girl confused and conflicted in the face of competing demands and huge changes to a quiet and consistent life ("I told myself nobody ever died of sleeping in a strange bed"). The family drama pleasingly avoids falling into predictable patterns: Willa Mae's father can offer her things that the rest of her family can't and genuinely loves his daughter, which is why the pair finally return to Illinois. This is a gentle yet compelling family drama effectively set against the backdrop of a changing rural America. DS

MORRISON, TONI *The Book of Mean People*; by Toni and Slade Morrison; illus. by Pascal Lemaître. Hyperion, 2002 48p

Library ed. ISBN 0-7868-2471-9 \$17.49

Trade ed. ISBN 0-7868-0540-4 \$16.99

M 3-5 yrs

This catalogue of mean people covers all kinds of unpleasantness, ranging from mean faces ("Mostly, mean people frown") to mean voices ("Shouting is a favorite thing of mean people") to dictatorial siblings ("My brother is mean. When we play chess, he says, 'The knight can't go there'") to strict adults ("My teacher . . . says my letters are not on the lines"). There's an authentic voice of youthful frustration here, but the book is muddy on its notion of meanness, sometimes seemingly wanting to make an adult point about the destructiveness of genuine meanness ("Big people are little when they are mean"), sometimes conflating meanness and anger, and sometimes considering "meanness" to be anything that thwarts the young speaker's will. The poetic justifications of the youngster's bafflement are somewhat confusing in their own right ("He knows the night goes every day" may perplex young listeners more than the brother's mean chess restrictions on the knight's movements). Lemaître's spirited line-and-wash tactfully plays out the scenarios with humanoid bunnies rather than people, and the little longears is appealingly vulnerable; some of the portrayals are a bit odd (particularly the strangely breasted mother bunny), though, and some of the confusion about meanness occurs visually as well (are parents really mean for feeding kids peas?). The final determination to carry on in the face of such dampening folks ("I WILL SMILE

ANYWAY! How about that!") is bolstering, but ultimately this lacks the clear point that would make it useful. DS

MUNSCH, ROBERT *More Pies!*; illus. by Michael Martchenko. Cartwheel/Scholastic, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-439-18773-7 \$13.95 R 4-8 yrs

Samuel is hungry, hungry, hungry, and though his mother tries her best to fill him up ("You are a growing boy, and you need to eat"), even cereal, two milkshakes, three stacks of pancakes, and a fried chicken isn't enough to sate the boy. After being sent out to play, he hies himself off to the pie-eating contest, where his fellow competitors—a fireman, a lumberjack, and a construction worker—fall by the wayside with tummyaches and Samuel finally eats his fill. Between the food theme, the folkloric repetitions ("Samuel ate it all really fast"), and the delightful eating noises ("Chuka-chuka-chuka-chuka-chuka-chuka-CHOMP!"), this festival of orality is squarely on target for young listeners, and careful craftsmanship keeps the spirits high to the very end (when an overstuffed Sammy gives his trophy pie to his younger brother for chomping). Martchenko's watercolor illustrations are robustly entertaining rather than deep, and they're all the better for that: kids will roar with laughter at Samuel's devastated bedroom and the green, purple, and blue faces of his nauseated and fallen competitors. Sharper-eyed audience members may notice, amid the happily multicultural Northwest-Coast world, bizarre and amusing details such as the household parrot's commandeering of the remote in order to watch parrot television and the pterodactyl (or perhaps a pteranodon) viewing the pie-eating contest from a safe distance. This is the kind of family favorite that bigger siblings get a kick out of sharing with littler ones; this would also be a lively readaloud for a picnic, so long as you're prepared for chaos à la mode. DS

NAYLOR, PHYLLIS REYNOLDS *Blizzard's Wake*. Atheneum, 2002 212p
ISBN 0-689-85220-7 \$16.95 R Gr. 6-9

It's March of 1941, and the weather is about to take a sudden turn and spin into a treacherous blizzard. It's also the day that Zeke Dexter is released from jail, where he has served a term for negligent homicide in a drunk-driving incident. As Zeke makes his way toward his brother's burned-out home, Kate Sterling, fifteen-year-old daughter of the woman Zeke killed, is home alone while her father and younger brother, Jesse, are in town on Doctor Sterling's rounds. When the storm hits with white-out force, Jesse and the doctor are stranded at the edge of their own property in their unheated car, Zeke is approaching on the open road, and Kate is indoors, frantic to find a way to bring her family indoors to safety. The blizzard can barely match Kate's own fury when she finally rigs a guideline out to the car, only to find her father sheltering Zeke, the very man she wishes dead. After the full force of the storm—meteorological and emotional—has passed, Zeke and the Sterlings are snowed in at the family's home; the doctor purposefully extends Zeke's stay, realizing that unless his daughter has an opportunity to forgive Zeke, she'll never move on with her own life. Naylor ably teases readers along toward the convergence of events that will inevitably lock criminal and survivors in a wrenching confrontation, and it is much to her credit that she choreographs her characters' moves through convincingly mundane opportunities and decisions. What could

have been little more than a movie-of-the-week melodrama instead becomes an insightful tale of reconciliation. EB

OKIMOTO, JEAN DAVIES *The White Swan Express: A Story about Adoption*; by Jean Davies Okimoto and Elaine M. Aoki; illus. by Meilo So. Clarion, 2002 32p ISBN 0-618-16453-7 \$16.00 R 5-10 yrs

Four families—two traditional couples (Beth and Lewis Maynard, Howard and Jessica Suzuki), one nontraditional couple (Andrea Lee and Charlotte Appleford), and one single woman (Rebecca Mandel)—wake in great expectation to the day they leave for China to meet their adopted daughters. The text describes the intimate details of the soon-to-be parents' mornings: "In Miami, Beth Maynard soaked in the tub and in the kitchen Lewis Maynard burned the toast"; "In Minnetonka, Rebecca Mandel ate a grapefruit and fed Ralph [the cat]." Packing lists are checked and double-checked ("There were burp cloths, cans of formula, and little panda bears. There were baby wipes and medicine and bottles and spoons. And there were papers—lots of important papers—and baby pictures as tiny as a stamp") until finally the prospective parents are on their way. The story follows the parental hopefuls through their journey, including their sojourn together at the White Swan Hotel (hence the title) and their meeting with their adopted daughters, explaining that the members of the group kept in touch even after their return to North America. The text itself hews close to the emotional grain, never drifting far from the trepidation and joy of this experience. So's watercolors splash across the pages, their vibrant fluidity enhanced by flowing black lines and dollops of red. The art focuses on memorable and telling details from the child-oriented descriptions. An afterword explains that the story is based on co-author Aoki's own experience in adopting a daughter from China and gives some additional explanatory details. This is a purposeful, successful picture book specific to its intended audience yet emotionally involving enough for any group interested in understanding the different ways families grow. JMD

ØRDAL, STINA LANGLO *Princess Aasta*; written and illus. by Stina Langlo Ørdal. Bloomsbury, 2002 [32p] ISBN 1-58234-783-2 \$16.95 Reviewed from galleys R 3-5 yrs

When Princess Aasta longs for "a bear to love," she does what any sensible princess would do: she advertises for one in the newspaper. There is a mountain of response, but one nice polar bear, Kvitebjørn, stands out, and when the two meet, "Princess Aasta and Kvitebjørn wanted to be together always." The king is rather worried about his daughter's large and frightening-looking companion, especially when Kvitebjørn wants to take Aasta back to his own land for a day trip, but eventually he too is won over by the affectionate bruin. The absence of tension and climax make the story (which flap copy states is based on a Norwegian folktale) somewhat unshaped, but this is such an enticing vision that most youngsters won't care. The simple text makes Kvitebjørn a mixture of toy, pet, and ideal father ("And Princess Aasta would never be cold, because Kvitebjørn's fur kept her warm"), and there's a touch of Briggs' *The Snowman* to the unassuming magic of the snowy world (and Browne's *Gorilla* to the fantasy partnership). Ørdal's inventive artwork has its own individual style, with long, trickily lines conveying both a childlike tremulousness and confidence; joyous and approximate smears of color

(mostly in Aasta's clothes and her pink cheeks) enrich the snowy spreads and soften the stark contrast of black on white. Kvitebjørn's such a massive support that most spreads can't even get all of him in, focusing instead on his huge, loving paws, his smiling ursine face, and even, in one particularly effective spread, his broad and solid back, on which Aasta trustingly sleeps. This is an alluring depiction of a friendship that many youngsters will envy. DS

PORTER, TRACEY *A Dance of Sisters*. Cotler/HarperCollins, 2002 276p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-029239-3 \$17.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028182-0 \$15.99

Ad Gr. 5-8

At thirteen, serious-minded Delia has finally found the niche she's longed for as a promising ballet student in Madame Elanova's school: no longer a "motherless girl with a busy father and an unhappy sister, a girl who did her homework and danced in recitals," she now "belonged to something old and grand, something fragile, beautiful, but vivid." The "unhappy sister," Pearl, has been shipped off to boarding school after repeated expulsions; as Delia's absorption in ballet begins to take over her life, changing her personality and sending her into anorexia, it begins to look like Pearl's raging against the world holds some lessons for Delia. Porter creates a believable picture of Delia, who finds a new meaning in the strictures of ballet, who lives hungrily on the approval of the queenly Madame, and who completely loses her equilibrium when that approval is withdrawn, and the book's depiction of the febrile world of the ballet studio is detailed and convincing. The familial treatment is less effective: Pearl's coming into herself is sentimental and implausible, lacking the force of the ballet story, and her effect on Delia (and the girls' father) is more expedient than credible. This is therefore likeliest to be a successful read for young balletomanes drawn by the world of pointe shoes and barre work, such as those who enjoyed Southgate's *Another Way to Dance* (BCCB 1/97). DS

REEF, CATHERINE *This Our Dark Country: The American Settlers of Liberia*. Clarion, 2002 [136p] illus. with photographs

ISBN 0-618-14785-3 \$17.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-9

While much has been written about American abolitionism, less attention has been paid to its strange counterpart, the relocation of free blacks to a colony in West Africa. Implemented as a novel but largely unsuccessful experiment throughout much of the nineteenth century, it drew together such disparate proponents as politicians eager to be quit of "contraband" seized from ships after the importation of slaves was outlawed, plantation owners fearful of freemen inciting slave riots, and African Americans hopeful of establishing their own land of opportunity. The organization of the relocation, the challenging living conditions and haphazard support for the Liberian colonists, and the ebbs and surges of migration that closely paralleled the expansion and retraction of African-American opportunities within the United States are thoroughly considered. Reef is particularly skillful at examining the condescending attitudes of the American settlers toward their native neighbors (whom they, ironically, regarded as backward or even savage, much as they themselves were regarded back home), attitudes that would pave the way for the volatile uprisings that plague Liberia up to the present time. A well-selected gallery of maps, period lithographs, and captioned photos (many of which, as Reef

explains, date from the late 1800s) enhance the presentation; quotation sources, a bibliography, and an index are also included. EB

RUBIN, SUSAN GOLDMAN *Degas and the Dance: The Painter and the Petits Rats, Perfecting Their Art*. Abrams, 2002 32p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-8109-0567-1 \$17.95 R Gr. 3-6

The best-known artist of the ballet, Degas depicted the young girls of the Paris Opéra corps over and over again in painting and sculpture from 1855 to 1905. This book traces that artistic involvement, discussing the hard life of the "little rats" of the ballet and Degas' interest in various aspects of that life; it also addresses Degas' technique ("He loved using the colored chalks because he could combine areas of color with line") and changing approach as his sight dimmed ("On days when Degas could not see well enough to draw or paint, he modeled figures in wax as he had done early in his career"). The art history is skillfully blended with the ballet interest, as there's as much evocation of the lush hothouse world of the *petits rats* as of Degas' studio, and Rubin's fluid text provides a measured and elegant entree to both. It's too bad additional visuals weren't provided (historical photographs would have made a useful counterpoint), but Degas' green-lit landscapes of tulle and toe shoe is inarguably evocative. This would make an interesting preparation for a museum visit or a tasty glimpse of history for young balletomanes. Appended is a brief biography of Degas' life and career in general, as well as a minuscule-print bibliography. DS

SAYRE, APRIL PULLEY *Secrets of Sounds: Studying the Calls and Songs of Whales, Elephants, and Birds*. Houghton, 2002 64p illus. with photographs (Scientists in the Field)
ISBN 0-618-01514-0 \$16.00 R Gr. 3-7

This excellent science series now turns to the specialized and fascinating field of bioacoustics, examining the work of scientists who listen to underwater sounds, infrasound (sounds below the human-audible spectrum), and sounds in the sky. Sayre offers good descriptions of work with the various species and its import, such as the discovery of hippopotami's underwater communications and the uncovering of the vocal warnings of night-migrating birds, and she even provides some discussion of the main bioacoustical computer program. There's a strong emphasis on conservation throughout, with the various biologists finding evidence of environmental impact through their studies and taking stands small and large as a consequence; there's also an emphasis on the breadth and possibilities of science and the benefits of thinking creatively. Though not all the photographs are as evocative as one would like, it's understandably difficult to translate sound into image, and the pictures offer visual appeal in addition to a moderate amount of additional information. End matter includes a list of recordings as well as print materials for further exploration, plus contact information for the research projects mentioned, a glossary, and an index. DS

SCHERTLE, ALICE *All You Need for a Snowman*; illus. by Barbara Lavallee. Silver Whistle/Harcourt, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-15-200789-X \$16.00 R 3-6 yrs

A snowman's a pretty simple guy, isn't he? He just requires "billions of snowflakes, piled into a mound" and rolled into "one/ big cold/ well-rolled/ snowflake

ball," doesn't he? Well, not if you want to make him right. There's the little matter of a hat and bottlecap eyes. And of course the carrot nose. And let's not forget "walnut buttons,/ five in a row,/ belt in the middle,/ boots below,/ big wool scarf,/ broom to hold,/ mittens (in case his hands get cold)." And, while you're at it, you might as well take advantage of the fresh snowfall "floating down everywhere,/ piling up high. . ." to make a snow friend to keep him company. Schertle's joyous paean to winter is realized in verse that rolls as briskly as a downhill snowball and in watercolor pictures that hyperbolize the activities of exuberant youngsters as they scale their bulky buddy (now several times their size) and attire him for anyone's Best Dressed list. Lavalley's snowman emerges from his pristine world, contoured in dappled icy blues and enlivened by the riot-bright snowsuits, mittens, caps, and scarves that scamper over and around him. When the packing snow is just right, turn to this title for inspiration. Then hustle outside and get going on the real thing. EB

SIERRA, JUDY *Can You Guess My Name?: Traditional Tales around the World*; illus. by Stefano Vitale. Clarion, 2002 110p
ISBN 0-618-13328-3 \$20.00 R* Gr. 4-8

A tried-and-true storyteller who consistently delivers on her retellings of traditional tales, Sierra partners once again with illustrator Stefano Vitale, following the model successfully used for *Nursery Tales around the World* (BCCB 2/96). The collection is divided into five sections, each based on a familiar traditional tale: "I'll Blow Your House In!" offers three variants of "The Three Little Pigs"; "Just the Right Friends" contains three variants of "The Bremen Town Musicians"; "Can You Guess My Name?" includes three variants of "Rumpelstiltskin"; "I Married a Frog" has three versions of "The Frog Prince"; and "The Scary House in the Big Woods" contains three tales similar to "Hansel and Gretel." Culturally, the stories range from Anglo-American to Xhosa, from Argentina to Swaziland, and each is retold in a style eminently suited for reading aloud and storytelling. Sierra's introduction explains her approach to retelling; appended notes provide detailed information about the stories, and a list of works consulted cites the collections from which Sierra drew as well as some secondary sources. Vitale's illustrations (oil paint on mixed surfaces and collage, according to a note) have a textural solidity that gives them weight and presence. Decorative borders and full-page illustrations reflect the cultural backgrounds of the included tales; a saturated palette adds tonal richness and provides a visual link from story to story. The style of the paintings and included ornamental details shifts from tale to tale, from textile-inspired floral patterns to the primitive iconography (red eyes, sharp teeth, etc.) of ravaging wolves. The original audience for the slightly younger *Nursery Tales* will appreciate this step up to more exciting fare, while those who have not yet encountered Sierra's superior storytelling are in for a treat. JMD

SMITH, LINDA *Mrs. Biddlebox*; illus. by Marla Frazee. HarperCollins, 2002 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-029782-4 \$17.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-028690-3 \$15.99 R 5-9 yrs

Mrs. Biddlebox gets up on the wrong side of the bed ("The birds gave her a headache./ There were creakies in her chair./ A breeze blew dank and dreary/ And mussed up her hair"), and woe betide the morning. She makes a momentous decision born of her discontent: "*I will cook this rotten morning! I will turn it into*

cake! I will fire up my oven! I will set the day to bake!" The disgruntled protagonist does just that, gathering up the morning's gloom, shadows, fog, etc. into a huge iron pot. She whips her ingredients into dough and bakes a cake chock-full of the "DESPICABLE bad day," which she proceeds to eat with great relish: "Now with her belly full of crumbles/ And her nighty cap pulled tight,/ She threw the door wide open/ And welcomed in the night!" Smith's darkly humorous text rolls inexorably over its sometimes jingly verse to a satisfactorily filling conclusion. Frazee's illustrations cheerfully embrace the gloomy worldview of Mrs. Biddlebox, personifying the morning in sweeps of smoky curling line and employing a nearly monochromatic palette leavened by the occasional touch of color. This is a funny and ultimately uplifting commentary on dealing with the vicissitudes of life, and Mrs. Biddlebox's adamant refusal to look on the sunny side will cheer the most recalcitrant listener. JMD

STANLEY, DIANE *Saladin: Noble Prince of Islam*; written and illus. by Diane Stanley. HarperCollins, 2002 48p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-17136-2 \$18.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-17135-4 \$16.99

Ad Gr. 4-8

This offering is perhaps less a formal biography than a military history spotlighting the warrior prince who zealously defended Islamic-held territory in the "Holy Land" from equally zealous invasion by Christian Crusaders. Stanley emphasizes the relatively benign treatment of vanquished soldiers under Saladin's orders, comparing his methods of warfare favorably with the Christians' rapaciousness and double dealing. Tone varies from broad adulation of Saladin, to arid stretches of historical background, to gossipy barbs ("Now the king of France decided to leave after only two months. Apparently that was all the time in Richard's company that Philip could stand"). Formally composed, stiff-figured acrylics, upon which many readers will depend as they wade through textual details of Islamic and Christian political maneuverings, are ill-suited to battle scenes. Rigid soldiers storm the battlements with all the passion of molded plastic figures attacking Lego castles, and even the neatly bandaged wounded seem to lounge around their spacious tent (rainy outside, bone-dry inside) like malingering scouts on a camp out. Library shelves are hardly sagging under the weight of nonfiction materials on the Crusades, however, and this clearly focused account (with nice touches such as a glossary and postscript on the fates of the Frankish players) may be welcome in the collection. EB

TAYLOR, THEODORE *Lord of the Kill*. Blue Sky/Scholastic, 2002 246p

ISBN 0-439-33725-9 \$16.95

R Gr. 6-9

In this belated sequel to *The Sniper* (BCCB 12/89), sixteen-year-old Ben Jepson is left to oversee the family's Orange County wild cat refuge while his animal-rights-activist parents globe trot for their cause. As if supervising the adult staff and tending the daily needs of the big cats isn't challenge enough, finding the body of a murdered Asian woman in the jaguar enclosure pushes Ben to his limit, and he tries desperately to call his parents home. They're completely out of reach, though, and Ben must work with the local authorities to try to sort through a long list of suspects—from a skittish retirement community that would like to have the refuge shut down, to canned-hunt (quasi-legal "ranches" where caged animals are killed by unsportsmanlike sportsmen) operators who want the muckraking Jepsons

pressured out of business, to a Chinese secret society brokering tiger parts for traditional medicine, who seem to be sending Dr. Jepson a death threat. There's nothing like the prompt introduction of a half-devoured human carcass to set a story rolling, and even the somewhat loose plotting cannot stall the urgent, page-flipping pace. Taylor has his YA audience pegged, and even reluctant readers will be hot on Ben's tracks as he risks limb, life, and the family business to haul the bad guys to justice. EB

TCHANA, KATRIN, ad. *Sense Pass King: A Story from Cameroon*; illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Holiday House, 2002 32p
ISBN 0-8234-1577-5 \$16.95 R 6-10 yrs

Ma'antah, born "in the land of seven villages," manifests her cleverness early in life: "By the time she was two she could speak the languages of all seven villages and communicate with animals. When she was three, she could prepare dinner for her parents." The villagers begin to call her Sense Pass King, "because she had more sense than even the king." When the king hears of Ma'antah's reputation, he is not amused, and he eventually brings her to court where he can keep an eye on her. She becomes his advisor and even accompanies him on a voyage to secure the young daughter of a rich emperor as his wife. On the way home Ma'antah saves crew and passengers from a terrible sea serpent, securing the loyalty of the soldiers and the people, who then drive the king away and make Ma'antah queen. In an author's note, Tchana states that she heard this tale from her Cameroon husband, who heard it from his mother. In the traditional tale, Sense Pass King is a boy, but Tchana "decided to make Sense Pass King a girl, because we already know many stories about brave and clever little boys but not so many about brave and clever little girls." Although this change may raise a question about authentic representation of gender within the culture, Tchana (adapter of *The Serpent Slayer and Other Stories of Strong Women*, BCCB 11/00) has a firm grasp of folkloric structure; the pace of the tale is quick, and the rise and fall of the action is satisfyingly conclusive. Hyman's acrylic paintings distinctively articulate the characters (Ma'antah herself is an arrestingly beautiful child); decorated textiles, carved thrones, and other scenic details additionally define the folkloric world. This is an adventurous tale similar to Lloyd Alexander's *The Fortune Tellers* (BCCB 9/92) in tone and images, and those seeking a well-paced, handsomely illustrated story will be happy to share this one. JMD

THORNHILL, JAN, ad. *The Rumor: A Jataka Tale from India*; ad. and illus. by Jan Thornhill. Firefly/Maple Tree, 2002 32p
ISBN 1-894379-39-X \$17.95 R 4-7 yrs

A worrywart hare wakes with a start when a ripe mango crashes down "on a crunchy old palm frond behind the hare. It made such a loud sound she thought it was an explosion." Convinced the world is breaking up, the hare flees as fast as her legs will carry her. She panics the other hares with the rumor of the world's destruction; the hares in turn panic the boars, who panic the deer, who panic the tigers, who panic the rhinos, until "the huge stampede of animals ran from the brushland into the open plain, home of the lions." A wise young lion stops the stampede with a huge roar and the question "Who saw the world breaking up?" Lion and worrywart hare go back to the grove and discover the fallen mango, whereupon the lion chides the animals: "Didn't any of you check to see whether or not the world

was really breaking up?" Thornhill's adaptation of this teaching tale has a fine cumulative bounce that lends itself nicely to reading or telling aloud. Detailed and precise, the full-spread and full-page illustrations are faintly reminiscent of the intricacies of Kashmiri embroidery, the images of flora and fauna surrounded by decorative frames. The book closes with a specific source note and an explanation of the contemporary ecological threat to the pictured animals. JMD

WEEKS, SARAH *Guy Wire*. Geringer/HarperCollins, 2002 138p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-029493-0 \$17.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-029492-2 \$15.99

Ad Gr. 3-6

Guy (hero of *Regular Guy*, BCCB, 7/99; *Guy Time*, 5/00, and *My Guy*, 6/01) returns in this tale of friendship found and almost lost. Middle-schoolers Guy and his best friend, Buzz, are out riding bikes when Buzz's dart around a blind corner leads to a collision with a car. During a tense night in the hospital Guy remembers how, years ago, he blew out his birthday candles, wished for a best friend, and got Buzz. Not that becoming best friends was easy—second-graders Guy and Buzz first had to overcome nasty nicknames, buzz cuts, and shrub costumes (designed by Guy's overly creative mother for a class production of "The Princess and the Pea"). The flashback setting—in the boys' second-grade past, dealing with second-grade problems—makes this title difficult to place within the otherwise chronological series. The humor is less pungent here than in previous titles, and sometimes the author's adult voice is too evident. Still, the trials of building a friendship are successfully limned, and Guy's anxiety at his friend's danger is poignant, even if the frame is contrived. Fans will enjoy seeing the beginnings of the terrible twosome's buddyhood. JMD

WEISS, M. JERRY, comp. *Big City Cool: Short Stories about Urban Youth*; comp. by M. Jerry Weiss and Helen S. Weiss. Braziller/Persea, 2002 181p

Paper ed. ISBN 0-89255-278-6 \$8.95

Ad Gr. 7-10

A somewhat programmatic introduction precedes fourteen short stories (over half published in previous anthologies or collections) spotlighting youthful life in the big (or small) city. Stories include "Block Party—145th Street Style," by Walter Dean Myers, "Rules of the Game" by Amy Tan, "Alone and All Together" by Joseph Geha, "Dead Man Running" by Eugenia Colfer, and others. Each story is tagged with its location (Boston, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Cleveland, etc.), and each story is a slice of city life specific to its locale. The stories are varied in terms of subject matter but they are tonally similar: they tend to be shadowy, dark, or nihilistic, with the emphasis on endurance rather than epiphany. Although there are moments of hope, city dwelling is nearly universally seen as problematic and difficult, a matter of desperate survival rather than living fully. The quality of the stories themselves is uneven, but the cultural diversity of the characters and authors provides a variety that may make this a useful addition to short-story collections. JMD

WISNIEWSKI, DAVID *Sumo Mouse*; written and illus. by David Wisniewski. Chronicle, 2002 26p

ISBN 0-8118-3492-1 \$16.95

R 6-9 yrs

The feline underworld of Tokyo is kidnapping mice to provide the noisy innards for squeaky toys. Is there no one who can save them? "Above the streets of Tokyo,

a bulky shadow leaps . . . Is this some lawless lump in leotards? Or a chubby champion of justice?" Never fear. It's Sumo Mouse, protector of the weak, avenger of injustice, scourge of feline gangsters everywhere. The lone Sumo Mouse is triumphant over numerous miscreants, who "fall to his superior technique." Frantic to discover the true identity of the secret Sumo Mouse, the organized-crime cats decide he must be the champion sumo wrestler Gachinko and plan for the wrestler's downfall. What they don't know is that it's actually Yama, Gachinko's wise, mild-mannered barber, who has this secret life. Wisniewski has combined elements of Mighty Mouse, manga, and Batman comics, and the result is Sumo Mouse, a "hefty hero" of honorable intentions. The layered cut-paper illustrations have a controlled vigor (previously hinted at in Shepard's *Master Man*, BCCB 2/01) that belies this potentially static medium. A saturated palette of reds, purples, and golds adds visual intensity to riotous compositions already bursting from their borders. Endpapers featuring marching band mice chanting a laudatory verse ("If the earth begins to shake,/ If the sea makes buildings break,/ Don't be filled with great dismay!/ Sumo Mouse will save the day!") reinforce the Mighty Mouse feel of the entire enterprise. The combination of cartoon melodrama and technical virtuosity results in a seriocomic rendering of the age-old battle between good and evil that will surely touch the good of heart everywhere. A jacket note briefly mentions the author's research into sumo, "the national sport of Japan." JMD

ZEISES, LARA M. *Bringing Up the Bones*. Delacorte, 2002 213p
ISBN 0-385-73001-2 \$12.95

R Gr. 9-12

Eighteen-year-old Bridget "stopped believing in happy endings years ago, when my parents divorced and my mom went psycho and my dad abandoned me and my boyfriend died." That's somewhat of an overstatement, since the death of the boyfriend was only months ago, but the subsequent change in her life is monumental. Benji had been her best friend for over seven years, and without him Bridget struggles to find self-definition, fighting—or, sometimes, not fighting—to get past the morass of grief and doubt in which Benji's death has left her. At the heart of this agony is her genuine uncertainty about Benji's feelings for her, since he had, unbeknownst to his family, broken up with Bridget a short time before his death. The writing is somewhat overenamored of concrete details of brand and street names, and there seems to be more announcement of changes in Bridget than actual change, but this is still an intense and affecting portrait of a young woman who has completely lost her emotional balance. The book is sympathetic but authentic in its depiction of Bridget's fragility and defensiveness, and her stern judgmentality of others is a logical outgrowth of her own self-punishment: even when she's embarked on what seems to be a successful relationship with another young man, she feels as if she's betraying Benji. Zeises is particularly good at conveying Bridget's confusion, her desperate hopefulness to understand more about her and Benji's relationship, and her failure to realize that such additional understanding won't actually make his death easier to bear. This is a nuanced exploration of a complicated character uncertain about her direction, and readers will breathe a sigh of relief when Bridget finally starts seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. DS



BULLETIN BLUE RIBBONS 2002



Ah, the Blue Ribbons process: always familiar, yet always filled with surprises. This year's proceedings can probably best be summed up in one word: diversity. Not just in the books, though there's a fair amount there as well, but in the opinions. Through a combination of finesse and argument, we've boiled down those diverse opinions to this list of books; they've withstood the rigors of the process and still retained enough magic, humor, general excellence, or all of the above to remind us hard-bitten souls of the power of this literature. We hope you and your patrons find these powerful, too.

Deborah Stevenson, Editor

PICTURE BOOKS:

- Ahlberg, Allan. *A Bit More Bert*; illus. by Raymond Briggs. Farrar. 2-4 yrs (November)
- Deacon, Alexis. *Slow Loris*; written and illus. by Alexis Deacon. Kane/Miller. 4-7 yrs (May)
- Kalman, Maira. *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey*; written and illus. by Maira Kalman. Putnam. 5-8 yrs (October)
- Karas, G. Brian. *Atlantic*; written and illus. by G. Brian Karas. Putnam. 6-9 yrs (April)
- Lindgren, Barbro. *Benny and the Binky*; tr. by Elisabeth Kallick Dyssegaard; illus. by Olof Landström. Farrar. 4-7 yrs (May)
- McMullan, Kate. *I Sink!*; illus. by Jim McMullan. Cotler/HarperCollins. 3-7 yrs (June)
- Paye, Won-Ldy, ad. *Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia*; ad. by Won-Ldy Paye and Margaret H. Lippert; illus. by Julie Paschkis. Holt. 4-8 yrs (May)
- Raschka, Chris. *John Coltrane's Giant Steps*; written and illus. by Chris Raschka. Jackson/Atheneum. 6-10 yrs (September)
- Vyner, Tim. *World Team*; written and illus. by Tim Vyner. Roaring Brook. 5-8 yrs (May)

FICTION:

- Anderson, M. T. *Feed*. Candlewick. Gr. 7-12 (November)
- Bang-Campbell, Monika. *Little Rat Sets Sail*; illus. by Molly Bang. Harcourt. Gr. 2-3 (May)
- Cohn, Rachel. *Gingerbread*. Simon. Gr. 9-12 (April)
- Coulombis, Audrey. *Say Yes*. Putnam. Gr. 5-8 (July/August)
- Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*; illus. by Dave McKean. HarperCollins. Gr. 4-7 (November)
- Gantos, Jack. *What Would Joey Do?* Farrar. Gr. 5-7 (November)
- Koertge, Ron. *Stoner and Spaz*. Candlewick. Gr. 9-12 (March)
- McKay, Hilary. *Saffy's Angel*. McElderry. Gr. 5-8 (May)
- Meyer, L. A. *Bloody Jack: Being an Account of Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy*. Harcourt. Gr. 7-10 (December)
- Mills, Claudia. *7 x 9 = Trouble!*; illus. by G. Brian Karas. Farrar. Gr. 2-4 (April)
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*; illus. by Ann Grifalconi. HarperCollins. Gr. 3-8 (May)
- Watts, Julia. *Finding H. F.* Alyson, 2001. Gr. 7-12 (January)
- Wells, Rosemary. *Timothy's Tales from Hilltop School*; written and illus. by Rosemary Wells. Viking. 5-8 yrs (October)

NONFICTION:

- Burg, Brad. *Outside the Lines: Poetry at Play*; illus. by Rebecca Gibbon. Putnam. Gr. 2-5 (April)
- Fleischman, John. *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science*. Houghton. Gr. 4-9 (May)
- Gantos, Jack. *Hole in My Life*. Farrar. Gr. 9 up (May)
- Greenberg, Jan. *Action Jackson*; written by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Roaring Brook. Gr. 3-6 (November)
- Harris, Robie H. *Hello Benny!: What It's Like to Be a Baby*; illus. by Michael Emberley. McElderry. 4-7 yrs (November)
- Jacobsen, Ruth. *Rescued Images*; written and illus. by Ruth Jacobsen. Mikaya, 2001. Gr. 6 up (February)
- Kerley, Barbara. *A Cool Drink of Water*. National Geographic. 4-10 yrs (September)
- Old, Wendie. *To Fly: The Story of the Wright Brothers*; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Clarion. Gr. 3-5 (November)
- Partridge, Elizabeth. *This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life & Songs of Woody Guthrie*. Viking. Gr. 7 up (July/August)
- Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex*. Putnam. Gr. 8-12 (November)
- Walker, Sally M. *Fossil Fish Found Alive: Discovering the Coelacanth*; illus. by Laura Westlund and with photographs. Carolrhoda. Gr. 4-9 (April)

SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this index, which appears in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

- Accidents-fiction: Weeks
- Adoption-stories: Okimoto
- ADVENTURE: Alexander; Blacker;
Cadnum; Chabon; Taylor
- Africa: Reef
- African Americans: Boling; Grimes;
Reef
- African Americans-fiction:
McDonald
- African Americans-stories: Hartfield
- Aliens-fiction: Blacker
- Angels-fiction: Blacker
- Anger-fiction: Lynch
- Animals: Fanelli; King-Smith; Sayre
- Animals-stories: Erdrich; Thornhill
- Anthropology: Flieger
- Art appreciation:** Aiken
- Art history:** Rubin
- Artists-stories: Hartfield
- Aviation: Grimes
- Babies-stories: Gregory
- BABY BOOKS: Johnson
- Babysitters and babysitting-stories:
Gregory; Hershenhorn
- Baseball-fiction: Chabon
- Bears-stories: Ørdal
- BEDTIME STORIES: Bergman;
Ørdal
- BIOGRAPHIES: Carpenter;
Grimes; Rubin; Stanley
- Biology:** Sayre
- Brothers-fiction: Griffin
- Cameroon-stories: T'chana
- Camps and camping-fiction:
Clements
- Cats-stories: McClure
- Child care-fiction: Cannon
- Clothing-fiction: Briggs
- Contests-stories: Munsch
- Crime and criminals-fiction:
Alexander; Caletti; Griffin;
Naylor; Taylor
- Crusades: Stanley
- Dancers and dancing: Rubin
- Dancers and dancing-fiction: Porter
- Death-fiction: Griffin; Zeises
- Disasters-fiction: Naylor
- Dogs-fiction: Ferreira
- Dragons-fiction: Carus
- Emotions: Morrison
- Emotions-stories: Smith
- Ethics and values:** Cooper; Doyle;
Ferreira; Lynch; Naylor; Taylor
- Fairies-fiction: Flieger
- Families-fiction: Griffin
- Families-stories: Okimoto
- FANTASY: Black; Blacker; Carus;
Chabon; Feiffer; Fiedler; Flieger;
Hanley
- Farms and farming: King-Smith
- Farms and farming-fiction: Doyle
- Fathers and daughters-fiction:
Caletti; Moranville; Naylor;
Porter
- Fathers and sons-fiction: Doyle;
Lynch
- FOLKTALES AND FAIRY TALES:
Aiken; Bible; Craft; Cummings;
Erdrich; Sierra; T'chana;
Thornhill
- Food and eating-stories:
Hershenhorn; Munsch; Smith
- Friends and friendship-fiction:
Ferreira; Garden; Weeks; Zeises

Friends and friendship—stories:

Ørdal

Gangs—fiction: Griffin

Gender roles—fiction: Garden

Geography: Berry

Grandmothers—fiction: Greene

Health: Marrin

Heroes—stories: Wisniewski

HISTORICAL FICTION: Byars;

Cadnum; Cannon; Ellis; Fiedler;

Moranville

History, U.S.: Cooper; Reef

History, world: Marrin; Reef;

Stanley

Holidays: Boling

HUMOR: Briggs; Cummings;

Munsch; Weeks; Wisniewski

Hunters and hunting—fiction: Taylor

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Immigration: Reef

Japanese Americans: Cooper

Kidnapping—fiction: Alexander

Knights and chivalry—fiction:

Cadnum

Language arts: Boling

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King-Smith

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Love—fiction: Zeises

Magic and magicians—fiction:

Alexander; Hanley

Medieval life—fiction: Cadnum

Mice—stories: Wisniewski

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Monsters: Fanelli

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Music and musicians—fiction: Ellis;

Griffin

Mythology, classical: Fanelli

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Neighbors—stories: Feiffer;

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Rural life—fiction: Moranville

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Sisters—stories: Gregory

Slaves—fiction: Hanley

Snow—stories: Schertle

Sound: Sayre

South Africa—fiction: Ferreira

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Uncles—stories: Hartfield

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Urban life—stories: Hartfield

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Alexander; Moranville

Voyages and travel—stories: Bible;

Okimoto

Weather—fiction: Naylor

Weather—stories: Schertle

Women's studies: Grimes

Work—fiction: McDonald

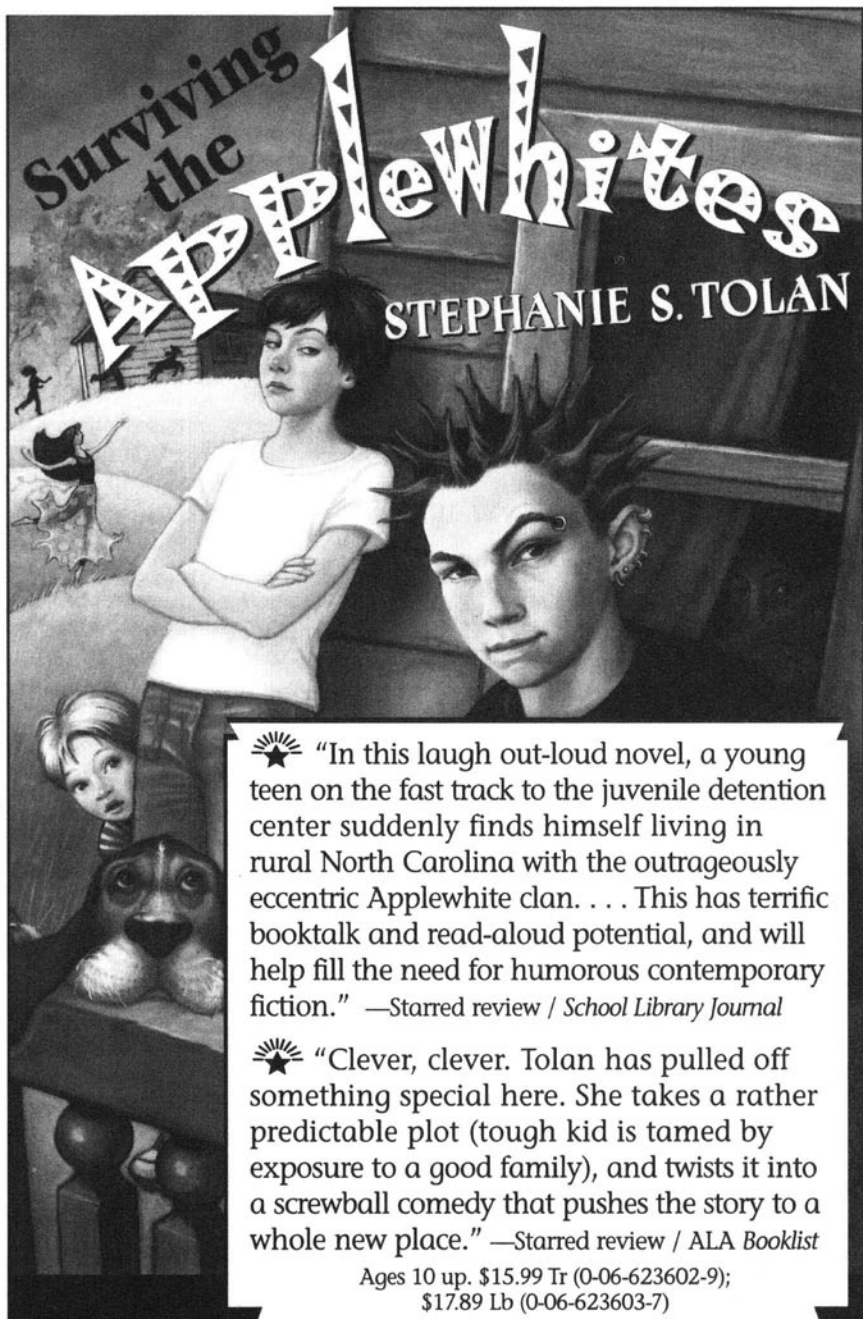
World cultures: Berry

World War II: Cooper

Writers and writing: Carpenter;

King-Smith

Writers and writing—fiction: Byars



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★ "Clever, clever. Tolan has pulled off something special here. She takes a rather predictable plot (tough kid is tamed by exposure to a good family), and twists it into a screwball comedy that pushes the story to a whole new place." —Starred review / *ALA Booklist*

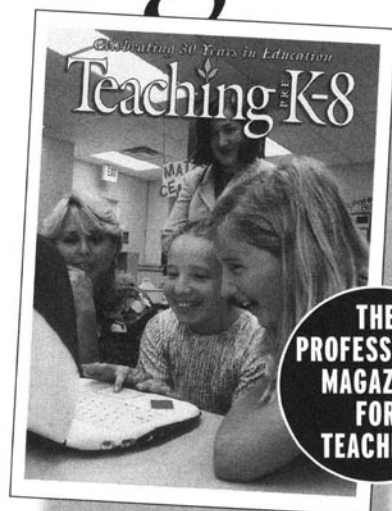
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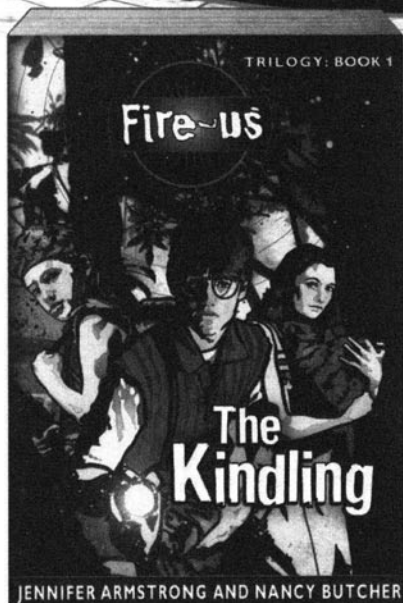
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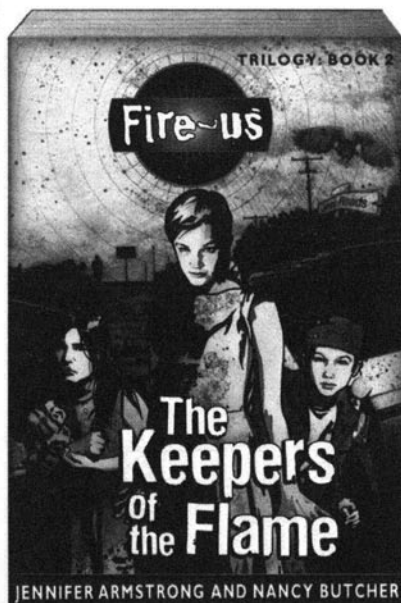
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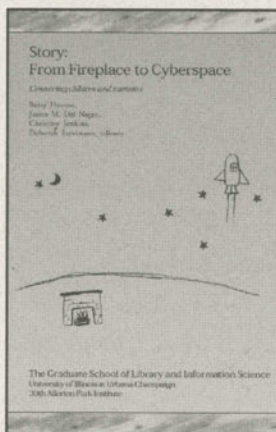
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**Papers Presented at the Allerton Park Institute
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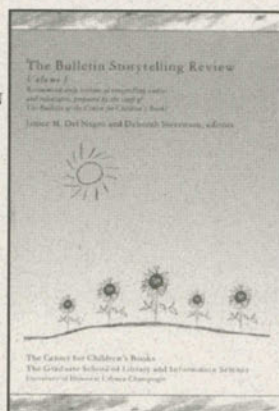
In our interest in children's welfare, we often forget that children are not simply passive receptacles for whatever treasure or trash the adult world throws at them but are lively agents who are continually interacting with their environment. Children actively create meaning as readers, viewers, and listeners. The 39th Allerton Park Institute papers emphasize the critical need to connect children and narrative as a way to affect their development as listeners, readers, viewers, and evaluators of literature—and information in all forms.

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EDITED BY JANICE M. DEL NEGRO AND DEBORAH STEVENSON

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